VALLEY VOICE

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Tulare County Likely to Leave Sequoia Valley EDC

STEVE PASTIS

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors is expected to leave the Sequoia Valley Economic Development Corporation as early as next month. The county has been providing about $80,000 annually to the EDC, which has served as the marketing and business recruitment organization for communities in the county since 1983.

Sequoia Valley Economic Development Corp. CEO Paul Saldana

The EDC claims a significant role in locating more than 100 companies and creating over 13,000 new jobs in the county, bringing an investment of $350 million to the local economy.

The county delayed any action to leave the EDC because if county money were taken out of the EDC, it would have put the county's involvement in California's Enterprise Zone Program at risk. That program ends on January 1, however, so supervisors are expected discuss ending their EDC involvement early in the new year.

"There's no official direction of the board," said Supervisor Allan Ishida at the December 11 EDC meeting. "There may be a lot of unofficial direction."

He did however provide an indication of county sentiment when asked by EDC Vice-Chair Craig Vejvoda if the county was planning to leave the EDC. "Unless there's a statutory reason for us to stay, it would be safe to assume so," Ishida responded.

In the meantime, comments made by county officials through local media make it seem that the county has

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Sequoia Mall Sale Price Disclosed

CATHERINE DOE

Photo by Mercedes Oldenbourg

It was recently disclosed that the final sales price of the Sequoia Mall was $10,750,000. David Paynter of Paynter Realty & Investments was the buyer. He bought the property under the recorded name of Caldwell Mooney Partners II LP. The Tustin developer made a 14.4% down payment of $1,550,000 and financed $9,200,00 using two different sources. His strategy for the highly leveraged purchase might be to save his capital for renovations.

The Sequoia Mall is located on one of the busiest intersections in Visalia, the corner of Mooney and Caldwell. It was built in 1973 and sold in 1998. The mall went through its first--and probably last--renovation in 1999. According to a November 25th *Visalia Times -Delta* article, the mall sold in 2003 for $27.4 million and then resold in 2007 to Shottenstein Property Group Benton Kraner based in Ohio, and Kimco Realty Corporation out of New York, the previous owners before David Paynter. The purchasing price was unknown in 2007 but it was listed for $30 million.

The county tax collector appraised the property at around $17 million in 2013. According to CoStar Comps, the condition of the sale was listed as "distress sale, high vacancy property, short sale." The commercial real estate information company also stated that "the subject property was 60% vacant at the time of sale; therefore, a cap rate was not applicable due to the high vacancy. Also, the property was a short sale. They went on to say, "The motivation for the buyer was a value-add opportunity through upgrading the property through capital improvements and leasing it up. The buyer is an individual investor."

The purchase involved four buildings built at different times with the main part of the mall being the oldest and the most expensive at $7,007,407.

Paynter has not disclosed what he plans on doing with the mall. According to a source involved with the mall's future, he is still working on his strategy to revive the mall. What the new owner does will depend on what the market will bear. Paynter is considering all his options such as making the structure an open-air mall or doing a full renovation. Demolition seems highly unlikely.

Healthy and happy — or a health hazard?

County Responds to Mooney Grove Cat Controversy

CATHERINE DOE

This is the second part of a two-part series on saving Mooney's Grove's cats. The first part focused on a volunteer group implementing the Trap and Release Program. This part focuses on the county's response and how it plans to move forward.

In response to the Valley Voice's article on the Trap, Neuter and Release (TNR) program for the Mooney Grove cats, Supervisor Phil Cox had this to say, "I'm not happy with the whole aura of the article. I was offended that the county was portrayed as all we want to do is kill cats, which is far from the truth."

I asked Supervisor Cox what was the truth. He said, ultimately the goal is to not have cats in the park but removed from Mooney Grove and adopted into private homes. Concerning the TNR theory that an established cat colony keeps out new cats, "I just don't think that is true. Cats aren't just going to walk into the park. Where are they going to come from? People are driving the cats to the park and dumping them there."

Because of all the publicity given the cats through the *Visalia Times-Delta* and the *Valley Voice*, Mr. Cox feels that the TNR program will encourage people to dump their cats in the park. Now people believe their cats will be well taken care of because of the recent press. He feels that the TNR Program could actually increase the number of cats, not decrease the number as the TNR volunteers advocate.

"I'm offended as much by the cats being abandoned as I am being portrayed that I don't care about cats," he said. "My mom raised me right. We love our animals and we would never consider dumping a cat in the park. That's what gets me so angry."

Supervisor Cox pointed out the recent hardship put on the cats living under such extreme weather condition with the mercury dipping into the 20's. "I just don't think that's humane. These cats came from someone's home. Mooney Grove is not their natural habitat. They need to be in someone's home."

The county is in the process of developing an updated ordinance about dumping animals in the park and the use of BB guns. They are consulting with their legal team to determine what is already on the books as illegal and what they need to expand upon before they post signs. Ultimately, the signs will state the new ordinances about dumping animals in the park and the legal consequences of perpetrating cruelty against any animal.

As for the ducks and geese, the county has no policy in place concerning whether to keep or get rid of them. John Hess, administrative analyst, responded in an email concerning Neil Pilegard's use of a bow and arrow to hunt the fowl. "This method of removing geese from the park was conducted in December 2012. Two geese were impacted. Due

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Sheriff's Race Expected to Heat Up

DAVID MARSH

With slightly less than six months to go before the voters' ballots for the 2014 election cycle begin to trickle in, already two candidates can be counted as in the race to replace Sheriff Bill Whitman. Whitman technically still holds the title of Tulare County Sheriff--and for the time being is collecting his full salary--while former undersheriff and now Acting Sheriff Mike Boudreaux currently occupies Whitman's old office. Boudreaux will be seeking his own first election victory to cement his recent promotion.

Although incumbency has historically given a decided advantage to most any candidate up for reelection, Boudreaux's relatively brief stint as sheriff could be expected to mute his that edge among voters--at least somewhat.

Also throwing his hat into the ring for the county's top law enforcement job is retired undersheriff David Whaley. Whaley, a 34-year veteran of the sheriff's department, kicked off his campaign November 12 in grand fashion by airing allegations of financial impropriety in the Deputy Sheriff's Association (DSA) as well as a lack of response by the department to those allegations.

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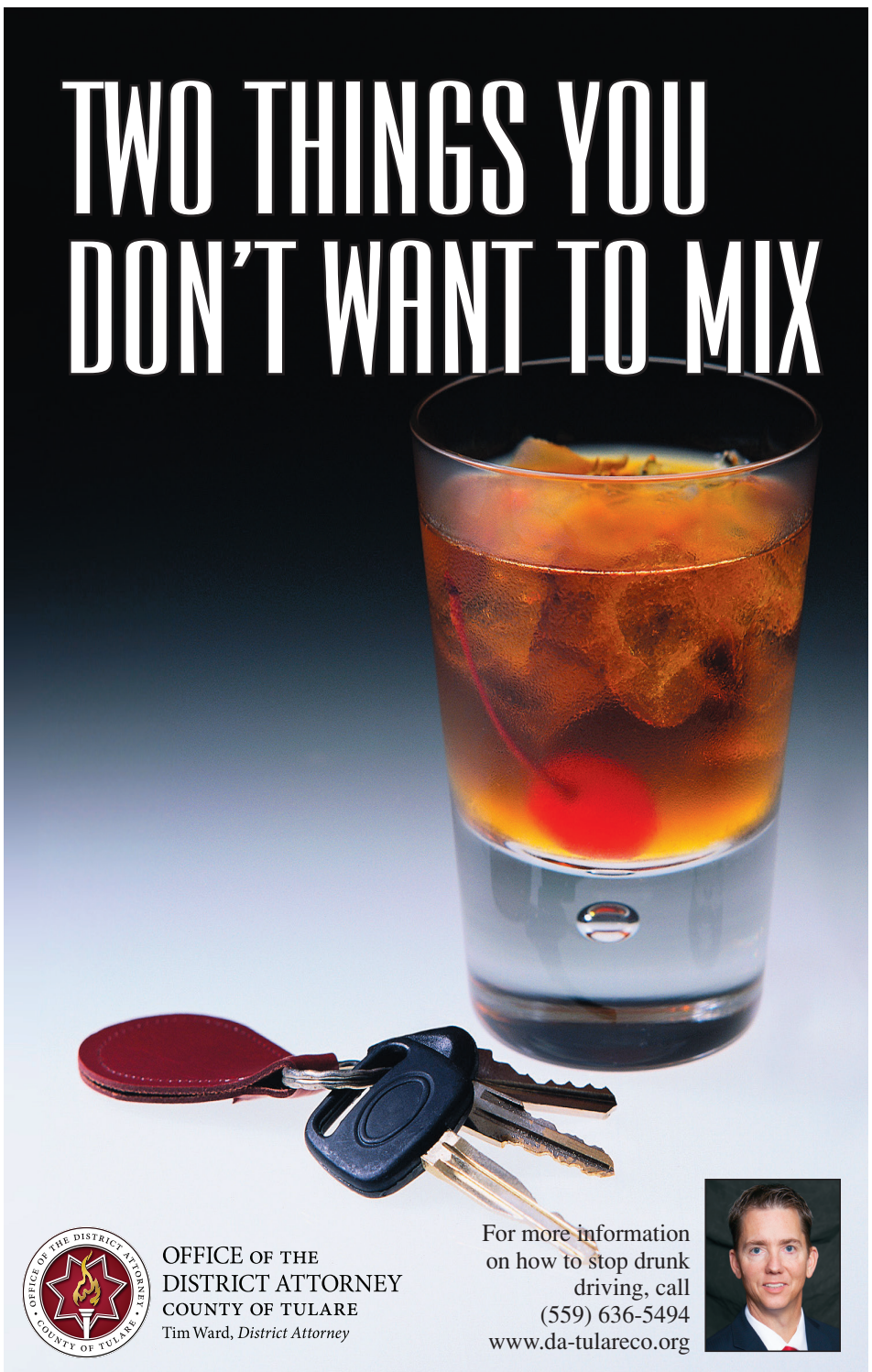
TWO THINGS YOU DON'T WANT TO MIX



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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

The Last Political Bellyache of 2013

In the circular firing squad that is today's Republican Party, Speaker of the House John Boehner has finally unveiled his outrage at the myopic short-term tactics of fractious far-right interest groups--tactics that have not furthered the party, but ironically ensured that, in some races at least, a republican cannot even be elected.

Here's why the firing squad is circular--or, if you prefer, how the snake is swallowing itself:

When ultra-rightwing interest groups are unhappy about, well, anything, they apply pressure on Congressional Republicans to vote accordingly. The notion of a conservative scorecard is bandied about, terms such as RINO--Republican in name only--are coined, and nouns can magically become verbs: in the next primary, for instance, any unruly incumbent can be "primaried." This is the ultimate threat, of course, but the obvious weakness of this premise is that it often backfires. Nobody enjoys an intra-party challenge, especially from a perceived fringe-group candidate. Mainstream conservatives speak the same language, cancel each other out, and the incumbent usually is returned to office. But who knows what language the fringe speaks? They are as the emotion of the moment, however fleeting, and their mother tongue is hyperbole.

And when these people win a primary they are frequently non-starters in their general election. Thus the snake swallows itself.

It's a bit late in the day for Boehner to be perturbed now, and suddenly, by conservative opposition to the recent bipartisan budget plan jointly proposed by House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, R-Wisconsin, and Senator Patty Murray, D-Washington. By cowering before this ultra-rightwing upswell, Republicans have allowed a small, if vocal, minority into their ranks--a fringe that has brought us budgetary standstill and, eventually, a shutdown of the federal government. This is precisely why the Republicans now find themselves fairly well-blamed for the many Congressional impasses we have over these few recent years endured. This is precisely why Congress suffers such an historically low approval rating. And this is precisely why Republicans now find themselves in such disarray. But the time to be critical of conservative interest groups, and to inveigh against their pressuring lawmakers, was when this trend was in its infancy.

"To do what we want," Ryan recently conceded, "we're going to have to win some elections." Exactly. Republicans would do themselves a huge favor if they'd quit putting cartoon candidates up for election. It fragments the party, and only serves to marginalize their agenda.

Take a bow, Koch brothers.

Okay. That's the final political bellyache of the year. Really. I'd like to wish everyone, here and everywhere, the blessings of the Season. And because 2013 has been uncommonly difficult--a year I wouldn't care to revisit, even in my dotage--I'd like to welcome 2014 by projecting best wishes upon all. May the New Year be eventful, but not harrowing; may it be fruitful, while not too taxing. Literally. May we each rest safely in our families and friends, and may they too find sanctuary with each of us. May good health continue where it is, and may it return where it is wanted. Ditto for good luck. May we all prosper or, failing that, may we remain serene. May good work--and deeds--be rewarded. May opportunity blossom. May humor and romance sweeten the quotidian. May all the difficulties that are sure to come be met with resilience; may they be defeated so expeditiously as is possible, and at the least allowable cost.

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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POLITICAL FIX

CATHERINE DOE

VIRGINIA GURROLA ANNOUNCES SHE WILL RUN FOR TC SUPERVISOR

Porterville City Council Member Virginia Gurrola announced last week she will be running for the Fifth District Tulare County Board of Supervisors seat. According to the *Porterville Recorder*, Ms. Gurrola said, "The idea of running for a county seat came from speaking with several groups and organizations around town." Now that she is retired she will have more time to devote to community work. "Right now is the time. I've got the time, energy, passion and conviction."

Ms. Gurrola has served several terms on the Porterville City Council. Her first term was in 1995 and she served for eight years. She was reelected in June of 2012. In June of 2013, serving as Mayor of Porterville, Ms. Gurrola issued a proclamation declaring June LGBT Pride Month. By September, she was removed as mayor in what was described as a "reorganization of the city council."

The incumbent Tulare County Supervisor, Mike Ennis, also announced that he would seek a third term as the Porterville area representative on the board of supervisors. Raised in Terra Bella, Mr. Ennis was first elected in 2006.

Besides Mr. Ennis, Ms. Gurrola will also be facing former Porterville City Council Member Felipe Martinez. The candidate that receives 50 percent of the vote in June of 2014 will win the seat. If no one wins 50 percent plus one vote, the two top vote-getters will have a runoff in November.

RALPH KAELBLE TO RUN FOR DA IN 2014

Ralph Kaelble recently announced that he is running for Tulare County District Attorney in the 2014 election. "I have a real passion for law enforcement and I believe I can do the job. Law enforcement is backing me because they believe that too," said Mr. Kaelble.

Mr. Kaelble is currently endorsed by many law enforcement organizations: Tulare County Deputy Sheriff's Association, Tulare County Corrections Association, Exeter Police Officer's Association, Dinuba Police Officer Association, Visalia Police Officer's Association and Lindsay Police Officer's Association. Don H. Gallian, former Tulare County Assistant District Attorney, and many others who used to work at the DA's office, also endorse Mr. Kaelble.

Mr. Kaelble moved to Visalia with his family to start his career in law as a Deputy District Attorney in Tulare County. As a deputy, he worked in Visalia, Porterville and Tulare. He prosecuted misdemeanors, general felonies, juvenile crimes, welfare fraud, auto theft, auto insurance fraud, child molestation, crimes against peace officers, and homicides before he was promoted to the position of Supervising Attorney. He supervised the Porterville office for approximately three years, and then supervised the Family Protection Unit (domestic violence, adult sexual assault, child molestation, sex offender registration, elder abuse) for two years.

While at the District Attorney's office, Mr. Kaelble was a part of the Sexual Assault Response Team and the Elder Abuse Multidisciplinary Team. He received the Porterville Exchange Club Prosecutor of the Year Award in 2008. Mr. Kaelbe has trained law enforcement, attorneys, students at the police academy, and community volunteers in many areas over the course of his career. During his time in the District Attorney's office, he worked closely with law enforcement to find justice for victims of crime.

Mr. Kaelble was born and raised in the Los Angeles area. He decided to go to law school with the goal of becoming a prosecutor. He attended Loyola Law School in Los Angeles from 1995 to 1998. During law school, he volunteered for the District Attorney's Offices in San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties.

He and his wife have lived in the City of Visalia since 1999. He recently opened the Law Office of Ralph F. Kaelble in February of 2013.

Tim Ward is the current Tulare County DA. He also declared his candidacy in September for the 2014 election. He was appointed by the Board of Supervisors on October 16th, following Phil Cline's announcement that he was retiring. Mr. Ward was hired as a Tulare County Deputy District Attorney in 1999. In 2005, he was promoted to Supervising Attorney, and was later promoted to Assistant District Attorney in April 2011.

NO GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN FOR JANUARY

A federal budget plan that would remove the threat of a government shutdown for two years won easy approval last week from the House of Representatives. Reps. Devin Nunes, Kevin McCarthy and David Valadao all voted for the budget, along with Democrat Rep. Jim Costa. The only Central Valley congressman to vote no was Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Granite Bay, whose district includes the mountainous portions of Madera and Fresno counties. He was joined by 62 other house Republicans.

The budget was pounded out by a Republican, Rep. Paul Ryan, and a Democrat, Senator Patty Murray. The budget passed on a 332-94 vote and now goes to the Democratic-led Senate.

Even though there are 238 Republicans in the House, Speaker John Boehner could not get the needed 217 votes for a simple majority from his fellow Republicans and had to rely on Democrats. Only 169 Republicans voted to support Rep. Ryan's plan. 163 Democrats voted for the budget and 32 against.

The Senate will be voting on the budget after press-time. Republicans facing a difficult primary against a Tea Party candidate are expected to vote against the budget deal. Moderate Republicans in the Senate may not like the budget, but are willing to vote for it to avoid another government shutdown in January.

Neither party was happy with the deal. Liberal Democrats wanted the budget to extend long-term unemployment benefits set to expire at the end of the year. Conservative Republicans responsible for the shutdown wanted the sequester to remain in place and wanted the deficit to be reduced immediately.

Overall, it proposes to save $85 billion and would reduce the deficit by more than $20 billion. The reduction in the deficit though does not happen for a few years.

The White House supports the compromise.

"While this budget agreement is not perfect, it is a step in the right direction," Rep. Valadao said. "The deal responsibly reduces our national debt without increasing taxes on America's middle class."

Rep. Nunes' spokesman Jack Langer said the budget agreement "had nothing to do with unemployment insurance."

"We would have liked to see Obamacare repealed in this bill," Langer added, "but that also had nothing to do with a budget agreement."

Rep. Ryan noted that Washington politicians have "been at each other's throats for a long time" over budget issues, and Republicans must first win some elections in order to get all the deficit reduction and spending cuts they want.

According to CNN, "Final congressional approval of the elusive budget agreement would mark a rare win for bipartisanship and a step up for a Congress infected with political dysfunction and held in low public esteem with midterm elections less than a year off."

The agreement reached by Rep. Ryan of Wisconsin and Senator Murray of Washington would extend government spending into 2015 to remove the threat of another shutdown before next year's congressional elections. But it will expire in the heat of the 2016 presidential campaign, which should prove interesting.

Working across the aisle raised Rep. Ryan's presidential clout exponentially. Kathleen Parker, columnist for the *Washington Post*, she said, "No longer is Ryan the kid standing next to the grown –up, he has matured into a full-throated advocate for bipartisan problem-solving with a tough stance on fiscal restraint, who is also humorous, humble and respectful toward his political opponents. He even speaks with greater authority than when he was Mitt Romney's sidekick." Ms. Parker's comments about Mr. Roney's campaign are true. They practically muzzled Rep. Ryan after he was chosen as Mr. Romney's running mate.

Ms. Parker calls Rep. Ryan the missing leader the GOP has been searching for and who is being groomed for the 2016 election. Taking it a step further, it would be interesting to speculate on who would be picked as his running mate. Rep. Devin Nunes perhaps?

Though their Democratic competition likely would be geriatric, that presidential ticket could not beat Hillary Clinton. The GOP needs to throw someone under the bus for the 2016 election, maybe Chris Christie and his big mouth, because whoever loses to Clinton will be finished in future presidential races.

Let's hope Rep. Ryan does an impressive job in the Republican primary, loses, then runs in earnest in 2020. Maybe he can do better than his 2008 running mate.

Christmas Tree Auction Raises Over $180,000 for Local Charities

The Christmas wishes of 29 local charities and non-profit organizations were granted with more than $180,000 in donations raised at the 33rd annual Christmas Tree Auction held December 6th at the Visalia Convention Center.

After 33 years of raising funds for local charities, the Christmas Tree Auction has become a legacy in Visalia as non-profits use this black-tie celebration to advance their mission through the donations they receive and awareness they generate. For many, this event is one of the primary fundraisers they rely on to keep their operations running throughout the year.

Visalia Rescue Mission raised the most funds with their live auction tree, totaling $62,000. The highest-selling silent auction item went for $925, benefiting the Jeff Barnes Brain Injury Foundation, and the most profitable silent trees brought in $1,000 each for Habitat for Humanity of Tulare County and Kaweah Delta Hospice Foundation.

Attendance at the Christmas Tree Auction was very strong this year with 500 people attending the VIP dinner and an additional 500 joining the general admission party.

New this year to the auction was the inclusion of The Groppetti Automotive Family Giving Tree, a sponsored tree that was raffled off, with individuals purchasing tickets for a chance to take the tree home and direct the proceeds to the charity of their choice. The Giving Tree raised approximately $4,500 in proceeds, which the winning ticket holder donated to Court Appointed Special Advocates of Tulare County.

The mission of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce is to serve as the "voice of business," providing strategic leadership and engagement in building the future of business and the community through information, services and advocacy to the employers of our community.

Tulare County Closer to Receiving $40 Million for New Correctional Facility

STAFF REPORTS

Tulare County is one step closer to receiving $40 million in state funds to replace the existing Men's Correctional Facility and Day Reporting Center located north of Visalia.

A committee of the Board of State and Community Corrections recommended to allocate $500 million to 15 counties for upgrading local jails to include rehabilitative program space that meets Gov. Jerry Brown's prison and public safety realignment goals. The recommendations will be considered at the Board of State and Community Corrections meeting on January 16 in Los Angeles.

"This is very exciting news for Tulare County," said Pete Vander Poel, chairman of the Board of Supervisors. "This is a facility that is certainly needed due to the influx of state prisoners as a result of realignment. I would like to commend the Tulare County team that put together the application that will ultimately meet a very important need."

Tulare County Acting Sheriff Mike Boudreaux said the recommendation is extremely good news for his department.

"I am so pleased with the positive collaborative effort from all of the county partners that made this proposal viable," Boudreaux said. "The future of this department and the county as a whole requires us to actively seek opportunities such as this to improve the infrastructure of our detention facilities. Our team has been diligently working on this project, making several trips to Sacramento. I am excited for the project and for the future of our department."

If the recommendation is approved, the funding would pay for 90 percent of construction and related expenses for the project. The program requires Tulare County to pledge 10 percent, or $4.4 million, of the project amount in matching funds from cash or in-kind sources.

The project would replace existing facilities with a 384-bed jail, day reporting center, vocational center, and program space in Visalia. Features of the project include a jail that will house the cells in small groups; several classrooms dedicated to educational, cognitive behavioral therapy, and vocational instruction; and a small number of administrative segregation cells.

According to the Board of State and Community Corrections, 36 counties submitted requests for funding that were ranked according to how closely they met the requirements of AB 109's landmark reform mandate to house and rehabilitate non-serious, non-violent, non-sexual offenders in their home communities. Realignment seeks to improve rehabilitation results by keeping offenders close to families and support systems. It includes constitutionally guaranteed funding for proven programs that support offenders' successful transition back into the community.

Under realignment, the state is investing hundreds millions of dollars in local rehabilitation and crime-prevention programs to continue to improve public safety in our communities. The impact of these investments will be measured over years as the programs develop.

The construction funding is a result of SB 1022, which provided for the issuance of lease revenue bonds to help finance the jail modifications needed to accommodate offenders who otherwise would have been sent to state prisons.

Many jails do not have classroom space for training and rehabilitation programs. SB 1022 specified that counties would be considered that are seeking to replace or upgrade outdated facilities and provide alternatives to incarceration, including mental health and substance treatment.

Construction projects deemed most ready to begin were more heavily weighted. Counties also were required to show they have set aside a minimum of 10 percent of the total project costs.

The proposed allocations announced were decided by a BSCC executive steering committee following presentations in Sacramento December 4-5. The BSCC was established by 2012 legislation to serve as an independent body providing realignment leadership and technical assistance to the adult and juvenile criminal justice systems.

County Launches Fraud Hotline

Tulare County has had financial and operating controls in place to provide reasonable assurance that fraudulent, illegal or dishonest activity by employees, officers, business contacts or others is prevented or detected, but the potential for inappropriate activities and behavior still exists.

As a result, Auditor-Controller Rita A. Woodard announced the implementation of a new County of Tulare Fraud Hotline, (559) 636-5230, for whistleblowers to report improper or inappropriate activities not identified by existing controls.

The hotline has been created to report activities including: theft, embezzlement, improper reporting of time, payments, misuse or questionable use of cash, diversion of or lack of timely deposit of county revenues, credit card fraud, inappropriate communication of confidential information (pay, social security number, other protected personal or financial information), and any other illegal or questionable acts that have a financial impact on the county.

Incidents can be filed by either providing information via the dedicated hotline number, or an online form can be completed and emailed directly to the Auditor-Controller's Office. The link to the online form can be found at tularecounty.ca.gov/auditor. The person submitting the report may choose to remain anonymous, or may leave additional information so that he or she can be contacted with any questions.

For more information, call 636-5200 or visit tularecounty.ca.gov/auditor.

AutoZone Grand Opening Launches Earlimart's White River Plaza

STAFF REPORTS

The nation's newest AutoZone opened its doors in White River Plaza, located at the northeastern corner of Avenue 56 (Sierra Highway) and CA State Route 99 in Earlimart.

The 7,500-square-foot building was the site of a ribbon-cutting ceremony on December 12.

"AutoZone is the country's largest retailer of automotive aftermarket products with more than 4,800 stores across the United States," said Michael Washam, Tulare County economic development manager. "The new AutoZone will provide a clean, well-lit, well-merchandised store offering a large selection of automotive products not currently available in the community."

While the AutoZone is the first retailer to open at the White River Plaza, a Dollar General store is currently under construction and is expected to open in February. The White River Plaza development is the largest retail commercial development ever built in the community of Earlimart. Additional tenants planned at White River Plaza include a supermarket, national fast food restaurants, and other retail and services businesses.

"The White River Plaza has been several years in the making, and the community of Earlimart and Tulare County are thrilled to see the doors begin to open," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Pete Vander Poel, who represents the Earlimart area. "I am proud to support economic development activity that will provide jobs and resources ranging from auto parts to fresh and nutritious food for residents."

White River Plaza is a 7.5-acre development project that was approved by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors earlier this year. The project is being developed by White River Plaza LLC, headed by Tom Hocking and Max Bacerra, local developers.

Tulare County Supervisor Pete Vander Poel, left, and developer Max Bacerra, center, are interviewed at the new White River Plaza in Earlimart.

"We wanted to be a part of Earlimart's progress and help create new and permanent jobs for the residents in the local area," said Bacerra. "The community of Earlimart is the gateway into Tulare County from Southern California and we are glad to be a part of a very positive and refreshing community."

Additional new buildings and businesses are being processed and negotiated at the present time. The White River Plaza development should see more store openings throughout 2014.

California Engineers Name Assemblywoman Conway '2013 Legislator of the Year'

In recognition of Assembly Republican Leader Connie Conway's commitment to job creation and infrastructure investment, the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) California has named her "2013 Legislator of the Year."

"Engineers make our state more vibrant and their hard work benefits our state in both the short and long term," said Conway. "Well-paying jobs are created during project construction, but the economic benefits continue even after the project is complete. Cutting-edge infrastructure ensures that we have reliable goods movement, which helps our state remain competitive in a global economy. This recognition by ACEC is greatly appreciated, but I'm also grateful for the hard work by engineers and land surveyors to build a stronger California."

During her tenure in the legislature, Conway has been a strong supporter of legislation to eliminate frivolous legal roadblocks to infrastructure projects and improving California's business climate. She also has advocated for education policies that ensure students receive the skills they need to be prepared for the jobs of the future.

"ACEC California is impressed with Assemblywoman Conway's strong understanding of the many issues facing engineering and surveying businesses in California today," said ACEC California President Bill Wagner. "We really appreciate her willingness to publicly articulate the importance of improving California's business climate and infrastructure delivery."

ACEC California is a 50+ year-old, nonprofit association of private consulting engineering and land surveying firms. As a statewide organization, ACEC is dedicated to enhancing the consulting engineering and land surveying professions, protecting the general public, and promoting use of the private sector in the growth and development of our state. For more information, visit www.acec-ca.org.

Ruiz 4 Kids Fiesta Distributes Record $352,189

The 2013 Ruiz 4 Kids Annual Fiesta fundraiser surpassed monies raised from last year's event. In total, the event raised $352,189 – a 30 percent increase from 2012.

"We are so grateful and want to thank everyone who supported our community organizations," said Kim Ruiz Beck, chairman of Ruiz Foods, Inc. and president of Ruiz 4 Kids.

A representative from each of the four organizations was presented with a check at the Annual Ruiz Holiday Luncheon held December 10 at the Visalia Convention Center.

Wish Upon A Star, an organization granting wishes that provide a sense of comfort and support to Central Valley children suffering from high-risk and terminal illnesses, received $77,224.85.

CASA of Tulare County, which speaks up for the innocent children who are victims of abuse and neglect by advocating for their safety and well-being by training community volunteers to represent their best interests and be their voice in court, received $95,954.85.

Blind Babies Foundation, an Oakland-based organization focused on providing critical early intervention and educational services to Tulare and Kings County infants and preschoolers who are blind or visually impaired, received $75,654.85.

Miracle League of Visalia, which allows disabled children and youth to be a part of baseball in a way not otherwise possible, received $103,354.85.

Ruiz 4 Kids was founded in 1990 to explore ways to assist families with children in need. Since then, Ruiz 4 Kids has organized two annual fundraising events – a golf invitational to raise monies for college scholarships and a fiesta event to raise monies for area nonprofits who are in need to grow their children-focused programs.

Ruiz Foods is a privately owned corporation with corporate offices in Dinuba.

A New Year's Resolution: Advocate for an Abused or Neglected Child

New Year's resolutions typically focus on self-improvement: lose weight, stop smoking and exercise more often. This year, CASA of Tulare County is encouraging a new, more lasting resolution. Why not resolve to improve the life of a child who has suffered abuse and neglect?

As a Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), volunteers receive in-depth training to advocate in court and in the community for the needs and rights of children in foster care. CASA volunteers come from all walks of life and professions but have one thing in common: they care about kids.

Orientations for prospective volunteers are offered Mondays at 5:30pm and Thursdays at noon (except on holidays, Dec. 24-Jan. 1). The next training session for CASA volunteers begins Tuesday, January 7, at 5:30pm. All volunteer sessions are held at the CASA office, 1146 N. Chinowth, Visalia.

"Volunteers get to know the child they represent by talking with everyone in that child's life: parents and relatives, foster parents, teachers, medical professionals, attorneys, social workers and others. They use the information they gather to inform judges and others of what the child needs and what will be in the child's best interests," explained Marilyn Barr, executive director of CASA of Tulare County.

CASA volunteers complete a 38-hour, pre-service training and receive ongoing education and support. Once they are assigned to a case, they can expect to spend an average of 10-12 hours a month getting to know the child, gathering information, exploring resources to meet the child's needs, representing the child in court every six months and writing their reports.

"It's one of the most personally rewarding experiences I've ever had," says local volunteer Stacy McNabb. "For many of the kids I've worked with, I've been the only stable, supportive adult in their lives. My sole responsibility is to protect their rights and to help child welfare services find them a safe and nurturing forever home. I know that I'm not just helping these children, but their kids and their grandkids and generations of kids to follow."

For more information about becoming a CASA volunteer, call 625-4007.

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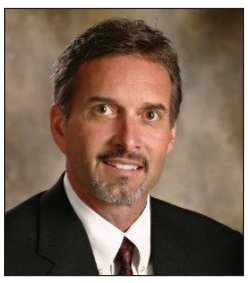

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Tulare Kings County DUI Task Force to Crack Down this Holiday Season

This holiday season, police, sheriff and CHP will be out in force cracking down on drunk drivers throughout the region with aggressive Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over enforcement. Through January 1, state and local law enforcement will be watching for drunk drivers to help keep roads safe for holiday travelers.

The Avoid the 18 DUI Task Force has plans in place for two DUI/Driver's License Checkpoints, 12 local roving DUI Saturation Patrols and two DUI Warrant/Probation Sweeps.

"You'll see us making lots of stops during this highly visible enforcement period and if we suspect anyone is driving while intoxicated, officers will show zero tolerance for drunk driving," said Visalia Police Department Sergeant Chris McLain.

The following will also be conducting DUI Checkpoints and Saturation patrols throughout this mobilization period: Avenal Police Department, Corcoran Police Department, Exeter Police Department, Farmersville Police Department, Hanford Police Department, Kings County Sheriff's Department, Tulare Police Department, Woodlake Police Department and California Highway Patrol.

Data shows that the holiday season is a particularly deadly time due to the increased number of drunk drivers on the roads, and every law enforcement agency in the county is prepared to stop and arrest any drunk driver they see to keep roads safe.

Nationally in the four years from 2007 to 2011, there were 4,169 people killed during the month of December in crashes that involved drivers with Blood Alcohol Concentrations of .08% or higher. In California during those same five Decembers, 505 were killed and thousands seriously injured.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 32,367 people were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes across the nation in 2011, and 31 percent (9,878) of those fatalities occurred in drunk-driving-related crashes. Californians witnessed at total of 2,835 deaths with 774 killed in DUI crashes on their streets and highways.

Drunk drivers often face jail time, the loss of their driver licenses, higher insurance rates and dozens of other expenses ranging from attorney fees, court costs, car towing and repairs, to lost wages due to time off from work. Even worse, a drunk driver can cause a traffic crash that claims someone else's life, or their own.

Please follow these tips to keep the holidays safe and happy:

- Even one drink can impair your judgment and increase the risk of getting arrested for driving drunk—or worse, the risk of having a crash while driving.
- If you will be drinking, do not plan on driving. Plan ahead; designate a sober driver before the party begins.
- If you have been drinking, do not drive. Call a taxi, phone a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation.
- Be responsible. If someone you know is drinking, do not let that person get behind the wheel.

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Sheriff

Continued from p. 1

Whaley's allegations that former DSA board members used DSA credit cards to make personal purchases have spurred a currently ongoing investigation by the Tulare County District Attorney's Office that could result in charges being filed against current members of the department.

The DSA is a union-like body composed of rank-and-file members of the department who are sergeants and below in rank. Membership in the DSA is not compulsory for sheriff's deputies.

The investigation will be hampered somewhat due to a history within the DSA of spotty financial record keeping, according to several current and former members.

As for Whaley, his immediate difficulty will be in gaining traction in a contest seemingly thus far devoid of any serious concerns likely to catch the attention of potential voters. An issue facing both candidates is the question of just how many likely voters yet remain in Tulare County, a legitimate concern in light of the near-record low voter turnout in the last election.

Whitman's generally broad popular support in the community throughout his reign as sheriff could also fuel a sense of voter apathy and a reluctance among voters for turning his hand-picked successor out of office.

Whaley has pointed to Boudreaux's recently approved request to the Tulare County Board of Supervisors for an additional allocated captain's position for the department as an example of the differences which set the two candidates apart.

"The department," said Whaley, "has become too top-heavy with management. That takes away resources for their salaries from the rest of the department, the rank-and-file members who are working to solve cases." He pointed out that a previously existing captain's position has remained vacant for the past year.

Boudreaux, who has recently undertaken a major restructuring of management-level positions within the department, cited a litany of rationales in his November 5th application to the supervisors.

> *"The times and the circumstances have changed over the years, and I am confident this will result in many improvements in our ability to manage the department, now as well as going forward."*
> — *Mike Boudreaux*

The department has operated for the past decade with five captain's positions. In that time, the department has landed over $20 million in federal grants which require extensive administrative oversight, and has grown to over 800 allocated positions. With the planned opening of a $60 million jail facility in Porterville, as well as an additional $40 million facility at the site of the former road camp, his department will soon face an enormous personnel expansion.

> *"The department has become too top-heavy with management. That takes away resources for their salaries from the rest of the department, the rank-and-file members who are working to solve cases."*
> — *David Whaley*

With an understanding that costs related to the allocation request were to be absorbed within the departments' existing budget, the supervisors approved his request.

Boudreaux's departmental restructuring plan has scrapped the traditional formula of a sheriff, followed by an undersheriff, followed by the five captain's positions. Instead, he has implemented a structure calling for a sheriff, followed by two assistant sheriffs, followed by four captain's positions. Each of the two formulas features a total of seven positions in the "management triangle."

The department's three major divisions; Detentions, Patrol and Investigations, will each be headed by a captain, while the fourth captain's position will be administrative in oversight of, among other things, federal grant monies.

The allocation for an additional captain's position, explained Boudreaux, won't result in the actual hiring of an additional captain. The departmental allocation number is needed to accommodate the fact that, theoretically, there are temporarily two active sheriff's positions for as long as Sheriff Whitman continues to collect his full pay.

An allocated captain's position carries an annual salary of approximately $115,000 plus benefits for a total of $160,000.

Boudreaux is confident his restructuring plan will result in a more streamlined management of the department while accommodating anticipated growth. Nor is he concerned that approximately seven years ago Whitman adopted a restructuring very much similar to the one Boudreaux has put in place, then discarded it as ineffective for the needs of the department at that time.

"The times and the circumstances have changed over the years, and I am confident this will result in many improvements in our ability to manage the department, now as well as going forward," Boudreaux said.

How far apart--or actually even similar--are the two candidates' views and management styles? And which is better equipped to lead a department that will soon be experiencing a prolonged period of extensive expansion and growth?

There are still almost six months until the 2014 elections.

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Cats

Continued from p. 1

to the ineffective practice, parks staff is working with Fish and Game to implement a trap and release program. This would consist of parks staff capturing the geese and releasing them to a pre-approved Fish and Game location."

THE PARK IS FOR THE PEOPLE

Supervisor Cox feels as strongly for his constituents as he does the cats. "The park is for the people." He believes that the cats have become a public safety issue for the people that use the park, particularly the threat of spreading diseases. "I can't imagine the liability if a child is running after a cat and the cat scratches them." The cat would then have to be found, trapped and tested for diseases. If the cat were found to have a disease, that disease could be transmitted to the child. He also brought up the fact that when you sit down to have a picnic, the cats are attracted to the food and a child could try and pet the cat. "There are a lot of 'what ifs.'"

The county now supports Trap and Release for geese.

Mary Lindsay, assistant county administrative officer, said that another public safety issue is the fleas. Two buildings had to be flea bombed in Mooney Grove, one of which the personnel had to be relocated. The Fire Dispatch and Communications Center is a 24-hour operation and the employees had to be relocated while the county bombed their building. The carpet in the Tulare County Historical Museum had to be replaced and that building also had to be flea bombed. All this came at considerable cost to the county.

"Another public safety issue is the litter that the people leave behind after feeding the cats," said Lindsay.

I asked Lindsay why the county was paying for something they could get for free. The county's costs include the park ranger's time in trapping the cat, Tulare County Animal Control picking up the cat, feeding the cat, putting down the cat if it is not adopted, and finally, disposal of the body.

> *"We could probably do a better job of getting the cats adopted out."*
> — *Phil Cox*

"This is a service that the county provides for the park," said Lindsay. "The priority is to provide a clean, safe environment for people using the park." The problem with the volunteer's free service is that they bring the cat back to the park. "The goal of the county is to get the cats out of the park," said Lindsay.

The county's official response to volunteers helping with the cats was:

"We understand and share an interest in the well-being of these cats, and would welcome any additional resources to help us find the cats permanent homes outside of the park. The primary mission of parks staff is to prevent any activities or practices that may harm the park or its visitors. Establishing a habitat for the cats to live in the park has created a public health and safety issue for staff and the public. County staff, including Parks and Animal Control, would welcome the participation of any individual, group or organization who is interested in helping us find nurturing, permanent homes for these cats."

THE COUNTY COMES UP WITH SOLUTIONS

"We could probably do a better job of getting the cats adopted out," said Cox. He suggested an "Adopt a Mooney Grove Cat Day."

Hess said that Tulare County Animal Control already keeps the Mooney Grove cats in a separate area and evaluates them individually. More people use the park in the spring and the adopting event could be held right in the park or coordinated with Valley Oak SPCA in front of Pet Smart.

I asked what will happen to the cats in the meantime. Will Tulare County Animal Control hold them until the spring event? Lindsay said, "Unfortunately, people continue to illegally dump cats in the park. This is a long-term problem."

I asked how long Tulare County Animal Control keeps the Mooney Grove cats once they are trapped. The media contact referred me to the Tulare County ordinance that states that any impounded animal which is not wearing a license tag has not been redeemed within six days after being impounded, sold or adopted, may be euthanized by the Division of Animal Control in a humane manner. An animal not wearing a license tag impounded pursuant to section 4-07-1215 shall be euthanized by the Division of Animal Control in a humane manner if, within six days after it is impounded, the owner has failed to make application to redeem the animal.

> *"I'm not happy with the whole aura of the article. I was offended that the county was portrayed as all we want to do is kill cats, which is far from the truth."*
> — *Phil Cox*

I brought up the fact that no one wants to adopt a half-grown, abandoned cat that may or may not be fixed. "I don't know that's true," said Cox. "We could make it an event and get the word out through our media contacts in the city and the county." I asked if while organizing the event the county would agree to a moratorium on trapping. Cox responded, "I think this is something we could move on quickly. We could hold them in a separate area until the event."

The media contact for Tulare County gave me this official response to my question that the county was taking happy, healthy feral cats out of the park and euthanizing them. "Due to a variety of concerns for the park and the cats, we believe that these cats deserve to be in nurturing, suitable homes and that Mooney Grove Park is not the appropriate environment for them."

I went by Tulare County Animal Control to see the Mooney Grove cats for myself. The lady in charge said that the Mooney Grove cats are kept in the back of the facility away from the public because they are feral or are sick. Right now they only had one feral Siamese, but I was not allowed back there because the cat was aggressive. She was not allowed to speculate about the cat's fate because, "The Mooney Grove cats have become a big issue."

She lead me into their very cozy adoption area where you could pick from a variety of cats. Jed Chernabaeff, Tulare County Media Contact, informed me that Tulare County Animal Control has an adoption event coming up on Saturday, December 21, at Petco in Visalia on the corner of Mooney and Caldwell, from 10am to 4pm where they will be adopting out cats and kittens. The cats remain there throughout the week and can be adopted during store hours. He also let me know that a total of 331 cat adoptions took place over the past 12 months.

Another suggestion by the county to reduce pet abandonment was to waive the fee for leaving your cat at the Valley Oak SPCA or Tulare County Animal Control. Mr. Cox also suggested they do a public education campaign that's it not acceptable to throw your cat away at the park.

Seeing as cat lovers will make themselves heard through their vote, I asked Supervisor Cox if it would make a difference to him if 10,000 people signed the petition to implement the TNR Program. He said those people should adopt a cat instead of sign a petition. "The goal is not to have cats in the park. It's more humane to place them in homes," he said.

I asked about the possibility of returning cats to the park that have been fixed, de-fleaed and vaccinated. "Absolutely not," he said.

Referring to the volunteers that take care of the cats in Mooney Grove, "I don't like the fact that they still come into the park."

This summer the county and the TNR Program volunteers were close to starting a pilot project with one colony of cats that lived next to the museum. The county's position is that during the implementation of this program, "a moratorium was not formally put in place to prevent county employees from trapping the cats." So the volunteer working on the TNR Program had no standing in confronting the museum curator for trapping two mother cats.

Supervisor Cox explained that the curator of the museum was threatened by one of the women implementing the TNR Program. Because of that incident, the pilot project was called off. I mentioned that the individual who confronted the employee about trapping the two mother cats has since moved away.

"It doesn't matter. They blew it," he said.

Tulare County Animal Control has an adoption event coming up on Saturday, December 21, at Petco in Visalia on Mooney from 10am to 4pm. They will have approximately 15 dogs ranging from puppies to adults of all sizes. The adoption fee is $60, which covers shots and a microchip, and the adopter will receive a $50 voucher towards the sterilization of the animal, along with a $10 voucher to cover the rabies vaccine. Currently, Animal Control has cats and kittens available for adoption at Visalia Petco, Visalia Petsmart and Porterville Petsmart.
The cats remain there throughout the week and can be adopted during store hours.
The number for the shelter is (559) 636-4050.

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Beware These Telemarketing Schemes and Scams

BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU

Telemarketing has become an extremely popular way to contact numerous potential customers quickly and easily in an effort to sell a variety of products and services. Home improvements, security systems, insurance policies, light bulbs and newspaper and magazine subscriptions are examples of products sold by the telephone. You may be contacted due to past purchases or charitable contributions or because you have been identified as a new homebuyer who may need a security system or insurance, or simply because you happen to have a telephone.

At the same time telephone marketing has risen in popularity as a legitimate way of selling, it has also become a common mode of defrauding the public. Some schemes are aimed specifically at businesses while others prey on individual consumers. This article explains the most common telemarketing frauds, legal actions being taken against dishonest operators, and what you can do to protect yourself from being victimized.

VACATION CERTIFICATES

Vacation certificate promoters notify you by telephone (or sometimes by mail) that you have been selected for a "free vacation" in the Bahamas or a cruise to some other luxurious travel spot. Or the vacation offer may include free airfare for one person with the purchase of a second fare. To receive the vacation certificate, you may be required to attend a sales promotion at a timeshare resort or membership campground or to purchase a membership in a travel club.

Consumer complaints to Better Business Bureau concerning vacation certificates have claimed that consumers received incomplete information regarding airfare and/or hotel costs and accommodations or claimed that the offer was misrepresented. "Free" vacations can end up costing hundreds or even thousands of dollars in regular coach airfares that must be purchased for the second traveler, inflated prices for hotel accommodations that must be obtained only through the promoter, and other extra charges which need to be paid in order to take advantage of the certificate. One such case involved a $31 Hawaiian vacation, which, needless to say, would cost far more once all the extra charges were included.

According to a conference sponsored by the American Society of Travel Agents, of all vacation vouchers sold, only 10% provide consumers with actual vacations. Most such vacation certificate vendors sell thousands of certificates at ridiculously low prices, such as the $31 trip to Hawaii, making it virtually impossible to actually furnish so many vacation packages.

Better Business Bureau suggests that if you are contacted and told you have won a prize of a vacation certificate, you should investigate carefully what payments you will be responsible for and/or what you have to buy to get the trip. For example, will you need to pay for airfare, lodging, additional fees for the peak tourist season, etc.? Before traveling, you should confirm all arrangements directly yourself. Ask the vacation certificate promoters what happens if the hotel accommodations are completely booked and under what circumstances your deposit can be returned. In general, Better Business Bureau also advises that you consider attending a sales presentation for a timeshare or other resort only if you are interested in what is for sale, not for the prize alone.

Consumers who feel they may have been victimized by vacation certificate promoters should immediately contact their local Better Business Bureau and law enforcement officials. Delays only serve to allow the promoter to change names and locales, making it even more difficult to get recourse.

'MOTOR BOAT' AND 'MOTOR CYCLE' PROMOTIONS

Another common telemarketing gambit used by scam promoters with great success is one where, often under the guise of participating in "market research" to test the product, consumers are offered motor boats or motorcycles "free" or at substantial discounts. Consumers, however, are first asked to send the company redemption fees or shipping and handling charges, which have often turned out to be much higher than the worth of the product. Such motorboats and cycles have generally been worth far less than represented by these promoters. For example, a motorboat turns out to be a rubber raft with a small battery powered motor that can barely be propelled around a swimming pool.

Many state attorneys general as well as the Federal Trade Commission and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service have taken actions against promoters of "free" prizes and motor boat and motorcycle offers. In some cases, the companies have been accused of illegally conducting lotteries since consumers must purchase merchandise in order to be eligible for any prize. In other cases, prizes were never received, or investigations revealed that companies charged shipping fees of $89 for boats valued at $40 and which really cost $9 to ship. Consumers should be aware that companies cannot afford to give genuinely valuable prizes to thousands of people nationwide and they should always view such offers, whether received by mail or over the telephone, with skepticism. In addition, companies which engage in genuine market research do not initially ask consumers to participate in a survey and then attempt to sell a product or service.

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City of Visalia, Community Partners Launch 'Help the Homeless' Campaign

The city of Visalia, in collaboration with faith-based, service provider and business community partners launched an awareness campaign December 1st entitled "Change That Counts – Help Those Who Help the Homeless."

The campaign will use a variety of different mediums – a website, social media outlets, flyers, bus billboards, and presentations – to encourage individuals to give their money to service providers to provide real help to the truly homeless.

"Many of us don't know how to respond when we see a person on the street asking for money. We may feel sympathetic, intimidated, uncomfortable or even pressured to give," said Visalia Mayor Steve Nelsen. "Giving money seems like a compassionate act and it may help people for the moment, but it often encourages destructive habits or stops them from seeking out help that could actually improve their lives. Instead, give your donation to those who help the homeless get off the streets and take steps to change their lives forever."

Visalia Police Lt. Steven Phillips said it's easy to confuse panhandlers with those who are truly homeless. "But, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, most panhandlers have places to live, and most homeless people do not panhandle."

To compliment their Change that Counts campaign, the Visalia City Council voted on December 3rd to amend the Aggressive Solicitation Ordinance to prohibit panhandling in public and retail parking lots during daytime hours. Currently, asking people for money isn't allowed after dark under Visalia's existing ordinance. The Community Development Department recommended that the ordinance be changed to also include the day time. The definition of "solicitation" in the ordinance is any request made in person seeking an immediate donation of money or other item of value.

Passive solicitation using a sign or other indications to ask for donations without actually approaching people is still allowed. So are solicitations concerning emergency vehicle repairs or vehicle towing. Aggressive pan handlers would be fined $100 for the first offense, $200 for the second and $500 for each subsequent offense.

Council Member Amy Shuklian was strongly in favor of the new ordinance but was wondering how it would be enforced. Nelsen also expressed his concerns over the ability to enforce the new ordinance. "Are we going to enforce it or does it just look good on paper?" Tracy Robertshaw, code enforcement officer, responded that if you encounter an aggressive panhandler, call the police. Shuklian recommended that the caller be observant because when the police show up they are going to want a detailed description of the panhandler.

Council Member Warren Gubler was encouraged by the new ordinance and the city's campaign saying that there are better ways to help people than hand over money. Robertshaw agreed, saying that Visalians are a very caring community but that giving the money to an organization is a better way to give.

Nelsen said that some of the panhandlers are not homeless so you really don't know who you are giving your money to. The city's new program will get the money to those who really need it.

For more information on how you can give help those who help the homeless with your money, go to www.helpvisaliahomeless.com. An online list of service providers gives avenues of options for your donation. If your faith-based or service club organization or business is interested in assisting with this effort, please contact Community Relations Manager Nancy Loliva at nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us or call (559) 713-4535.

The following is a list of organizations that accept donations and help the homeless in Visalia and Tulare County.

- **Visalia Emergency Aid** - 217 N.E. 3rd St, Visalia (559) 732-0101
- **Visalia Rescue Mission** - 322 NE First Ave, Visalia (559) 740-4178
- **VASH Program** - 1-877-424-3838
- **THP Plus (Aspiranet)** - (559)741-7358
- **San Joaquin Valley Veterans** - (559)584-8100
- **Samaritan Center** - 200 NW 3rd Ave, Visalia (559) 733-7331
- **Family Services** - (559) 741-7310 or (559) 732-7371 to volunteer
- **Family HealthCare Network Dental Service location:** 501 N. Bridge St., Visalia
- **Bethlehem Center** - 1638 N. Dinuba Blvd., Visalia Phone: (559) 734-1572
- **Center for Independent Living (CIL)** - (559) 622-9276
- **Central California Legal Services** - (559) 733-8770
- **Central Valley Recovery Services** - 320 W. Oak Ave Suite A, Visalia (559) 625-2995

Two-Year Study Reveals Drinking Water Issues in Disadvantaged Local Communities

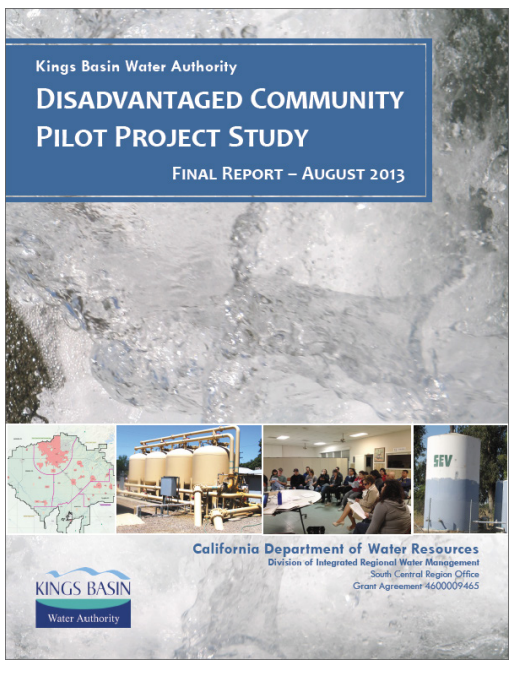
A two-year grassroots effort to engage residents in small South Valley communities regarding drinking water and wastewater issues came to an end with the final meeting of the Kings Basin Disadvantaged Communities Pilot Project Study last month.

The study was conducted by the Kings Basin Water Authority, a regional water agency comprised of more than 50 public, private and non-governmental agencies. The Water Authority received funding from the California Department of Water Resources to investigate and develop solutions for disadvantaged communities that could be integrated into regional water planning efforts for the Kings Basin region. To better understand these problems, an inventory of these communities and the problems they are facing was developed.

"This study has provided us with a much better picture of what constitutes a disadvantaged community in our region and what specific water management issues they are having in their communities," said Dave Orth, Kings Basin Water Authority board member.

There are more than 100 economically disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities within the Kings Basin region, which includes portions of Tulare, Kings and Fresno counties. A disadvantaged community (DAC) is defined by California Water Code as a community with an annual median household income of less than $48,314. A severely disadvantaged community (SDAC) is defined by California Public Resources Code as a community with an annual median household income of less than $36,235. These economically depressed communities represent special districts, schools, mobile home parks, cities, unincorporated communities, assemblage of residences with and without community water systems, and in some cases, communities that are served by private wells and individual septic systems.

A large number of the Kings Basin's DACs and SDACs currently face critical drinking water and wastewater challenges, but on their own do not possess the necessary technical or financial resources to overcome them. Water quality contaminants in rural communities originate from a variety of sources. Some are naturally occurring, such as arsenic or uranium; other contaminants are related to land use including point source and nonpoint source discharges from industrial, commercial, agriculture and human wastes, usually from septic systems.



The potential solutions are as varied as the contamination sources, and are difficult to standardize across multiple communities due to variables such as geographic location, local hydrologic conditions and chemistry, water system size, water source, governance structure and capacity, and individual preference.

Drawing upon years of experience working with San Joaquin Valley communities, a project team consisting of Provost and Pritchard Consulting Group, Self-Help Enterprises and Community Water Center developed individualized outreach plans to schools, small water systems, and residential areas such as mobile home parks and communities in the study area. Door-to-door outreach and dozens of community meetings were conducted throughout the region.

These tanks are part of an Arsenic Water Treatment Plant. Their purpose is filtration; the coagulated raw water is pumped into the tanks and the coagulant is filtered through the media within the tanks.

"Many residents in these rural communities do not use or have access to electronic methods of communications," said Sue Ruiz, community development specialist with Self-Help Enterprises. "Personal outreach was the most effective way to engage them in the process."

The study resulted in identifying five potential pilot projects throughout the Kings Basin that provided practical solutions for common problems with DAC drinking and wastewater systems. The projects included economies of scales analysis, community survey, improvements to a wastewater system, water supply improvements and Kings Basin Water Authority membership application support.

"The study allowed those involved to clarify water-related issues impacting their communities, explore potential regional solutions and consider various types of collaboration," said Maria Herrera, director of community advocacy for Community Water Center.

The outcomes and recommendations from the study will help other integrated regional planning efforts throughout the state to strengthen outreach to, and support of, DACs in their areas with critical water supply and water quality needs.

Community participants ended the last meeting of the study with a discussion on how to maintain the momentum of finding sustainable solutions to some of the most pressing drinking water issues in the region. The residents that participated concluded that the relationships and networks established during the study laid a solid foundation for advancing the work funded by the study. The participants also expressed a strong interest and considered ways to increase DAC participation in the integrated regional planning efforts of the Kings Basin Water Authority.

Tulare County Supervisors, Rotary Clubs Deliver Computers to Youth

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors, Tulare County Office of Education, Visalia Rotary clubs and Office Depot partnered together to deliver 110 computers to selected children from 45 schools on December 11. School officials nominated the students to receive computers based on their outstanding character and good citizenship.

Supervisor Vander Poel presents a computer to Alexis Manson.

The county contributed the computers and matching flat screens that were due to be sold as surplus. The Tulare County Purchasing Department tested the computers, erased all sensitive files and proprietary software, and installed fresh Windows XP operating systems.

County staff, Rotarians and other volunteers met at the Tulare County Surplus Store that morning and loaded up vehicles with the computers and delivered them. The chosen students and most of their teachers were unaware of the gifts until they were delivered.

'Food for Fines' Tally Completed

Reports from the branches of the Tulare County Library and Foodlink on their November "Food for Fines" program show the project was even more successful than expected.

Shopping Carts in the Visalia Branch Library quickly filled up with items donated to the 'Food for Fines' program

In addition to the $2,405.60 in fines forgiven by the main Visalia Library, the branches tallied another $1,554.67, and $80 in cash was donated, for a total value for the foodstuffs of $4040.27.

"The real cost of the donated items is undoubtedly higher," said County Librarian Jeff Scott. "Foodlink let us know the total for all branches, including Visalia, was 4,660 lbs. of food. The Foodlink folks are very pleased and are looking forward to being able to give many hungry Tulare residents a happy holiday. All 15 library branches are proud of our patrons for making this drive a great event."

EDC

Continued from p. 1

already left the EDC, in addition to providing reasons for that decision.

"I think it's the director," said Tulare County Chief Administrative Officer Jean Rousseau about EDC CEO Paul Saldana. "The county has been unhappy with the director and his performance for a long time."

Rousseau cited an economic development luncheon a few years ago where Saldana referred to Tulare County as a third world country "over and over again" as a reason that he does not support Saldana. "He's the salesman for the county. He's trying to attract businesses to come here. There could have been business prospects in the audience and there probably were."

"We haven't been satisfied with the EDC for years," echoed Ishida. "Our patience is near an end." He said that the county made the business decision to do its economic development "in house" two or three years ago. "We believe we'll get more response from spending the $80,000 internally. We promote unincorporated areas and small cities and also work with large cities."

The county's "in-house" economic development staff played a big role in bringing the new AutoZone to Earlimart and helped bring the new Family HealthCare Network clinic to Terra Bella, according to Ishida.

The Tulare County Economic Development Office has two staff members: Economic Development Manager Michael Washam and Film Commissioner & Tourism Manager Eric Coyne. The county has allocated them $85,000 for their economic development activities, including website maintenance, advertising and marketing expenses. The office also oversees a budget of $50,000 for tourism marketing, which includes a $35,000 contribution to the Sequoia Tourism Council, a regional tourism collaborative, and $15,000 to support a targeted Tulare County Tourism program. Another $50,000 for program funding for the Tulare County Film Commission is supplied by the Tulare County Association of Governments.

The office helped bring six solar projects to the county in 2013, which will provide all of the electrical needs of 10,032 households, according to Washam. A solar project in Alpaugh has been approved and two more pending.

"These construction projects have created over 400 good-paying jobs with many of the employees going through the Solar Workforce Pathway training program at Proteus, Inc.," said Washam.

He also reported that his office helped three health clinics open or expand, and five ag companies expand, creating more than 125 new jobs. Three vacant buildings had been "repurposed," resulting in another 39 jobs being created. They also played a major role in the construction of White River Plaza, a seven-acre retail commercial development in Earlimart, which is expected to create up to 200 new jobs.

Rousseau wanted to make it clear that, "The county is not trying to impose its will on anyone. We're not here to take leads and prospects from cities – not at all. We were just dissatisfied with what we were getting.

"We recognize the importance of the EDC," he continued. "We'd like to remain a part of it because collectively we are a lot stronger than we are separately."

The county's chief administrator has been among those sharing his opinions with the local media. "I did get out ahead of the board," he said. "They officially did not make a decision."

Rousseau wanted to avoid making the county's dissatisfaction with the EDC a personal issue. "It's not a personal thing with Paul," he said. "He's not a bad guy. It's business. As a CEO, I have to make sure we're spending our money as effectively as possible. I don't think that currently we are."

But would it change the county's decision if the EDC had a different CEO?

"I would say that it would," replied Rousseau. "It's just the director we have a lack of confidence in."

EDC board members were not in agreement with Rousseau's previous comments, which appeared in the local media last week.

"They have given reasons and none of them are based on facts," said Vejvoda, a former mayor of Tulare who represents his city on the board. He repeated the comment he heard that the county doesn't feel it's getting its bang for its buck. "In the last 10 years, the EDC has had a hand in bringing in a host of companies into Tulare County."

In that time, the EDC has provided assistance to 61 companies. Although information was not provided by all the companies, 2,379 new jobs were reported by the companies, with a total investment of $619 million in construction. The companies represent projects generated from marketing activities and existing relationships, or those in which the EDC was requested to assist the local jurisdiction.

The largest companies in terms of new jobs in the county include: VF Outdoor, Inc., which brought 350 jobs to Visalia; VWR International LLC, which brought 150 jobs to Visalia; and CaliCheese, which will begin construction on a new facility in Tulare in 2014 that will bring new 220 jobs.

"With those companies comes infrastructure improvements, which raises property taxes," said Vejvoda, who also mentioned benefits such as the increase in city revenues from payroll, and the increase in sales tax and utility tax. "The EDC is not fully responsible for all of (the businesses coming to the county), but without it some of them would not be here."

Vejvoda estimates that for its annual $80,000 investment, Tulare County receives $1.2 million in extra revenues from businesses that the EDC helps bring into the county. "If you say we're not getting our bang for the buck, that tells me that maybe you don't know how to work a calculator."

Vejvoda also dismissed the criticism of Saldana by county officials.

"I believe that's just an excuse," he said. "I'm the vice-chair of the EDC and on the executive committee. I can speak for every one of us when I say we're very pleased with Paul's performance. Everyone there is pleased with Paul's performance, so for the county to say they're not pleased with Paul's performance is hard to understand."

Vejvoda believes that Saldana was unfairly criticized for not attending a recent function in Terra Bella. "To call a guy out for not being someplace when he had no idea something was going on – that's ridiculous," he said. "None of us heard of this thing."

He also said it was unfair for county officials to blame Saldana for recent EDC policies.

"They seem to have a gripe that the EDC has gotten involved with higher education and tourism," said Vejvoda. "That was part of what the (EDC) board created. We were investing resources in tourism and higher education. We've since changed. The board gives Paul and his staff direction, and for the county to call him out for following board direction – that's just not right."

"The EDC is directed by a board of directors from the public and private sector," explained Saldana, who would not comment on the county's pending decision or on the opinions of others. "My job is to implement the work plan and achieve the goals and performance metrics that the board has approved as part of that work plan.

"We have and will continue to focus on serving the needs of our clients – the companies that are looking to bring new jobs into Tulare County," he continued. "The performance of the organization in generating new jobs and economic benefits for our communities speaks for itself and is reflective of the collaborative effort that has existed for the last 30 years in focusing on job creation. We will continue to be diligent in our pursuit of those new jobs for our residents."

While any city decisions to follow the county's lead would be made by their respective city councils, city managers in the county expected no change in their EDC involvement.

"Were part of the EDC," said Visalia City Manager Mike Olmos. "We believe there's value in that organization and the services they provide. Their distribution of leads is fair and provides solid opportunities to respond."

If the county does pull its funding from the EDC as expected, Vejvoda said the EDC will keep doing what it does. "We'll work with city managers and they'll come up with a budget," he said. "We'll find a way to make it happen. We work with the private sector as well. At one time, the public sector significantly contributed.

"The EDC will continue and will continue to create jobs," he added. "Every job that's created benefits everyone in the county in some way. You can contribute, or you can not contribute and just be a rider on the train without a ticket."

Diabetic Drugs May Be Dangerous To Your Health

New guide sheds light on the dangers of diabetic drugs and why doctors prescribe them anyway. You could be at risk!

A free guide has just been released that reveals why current therapy may make your condition worse. If you are frustrated that your blood sugars don't budge and continue to rise despite your drugs this guide is a must have. To receive your free guide entitled "Diabetic Ignorance: How Drug Companies, The Food Industry, and some Drs. set you up for Failure" call today 1-559-627-2225 or go to www.visaliadiabetesreport.com Dr. Ruben Garcia, DC

News in Brief...

PG&E PAYS $158 MILLION IN PROPERTY TAXES TO 49 CALIFORNIA COUNTIES

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) paid property taxes totaling more than $158 million to the 49 counties in which it operates in Northern and Central California. The payments are the first of two installments and represent all property taxes due for the period from July 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013. PG&E will make a second, identical payment on April 10 to each of the counties for the second half of the 2013-14 tax year, which runs from January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2014.

Tulare County's share is $389,583.63, and Kings County will receive $974,557.70.

"Local governments must address public safety, environmental protection, education and other needs with limited financial resources," said Mark Caron, PG&E's vice president of tax. "PG&E's timely and substantial payments to local governments help them address those vital community services."

MURAL POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE FORMS IN VISALIA

The Visalia City Council approved the appointment of a mural policy review committee to review the city's current mural policy and make recommendations on updates. The committee is to be comprised of seven members: two representatives from the Arts Consortium; one representative from the Parks and Recreation Commission; one representative from the Downtown Alliance; one from the Planning Commission; one from the Visalia Chamber of Commerce; and one Visalia City Council Member. Council Member Amy Shuklian will represent the council on the committee. The organizations will appoint members to the committee, and will complete its review of the city's policy by February 15.

VISALIA BUILDING PERMITS SHOW 9% INCREASE

Building permits issued in Visalia through November continue to surpass last year's numbers. New single family dwellings are up 52% over last year, and up 84% in value. Total numbers for the year to date are 369, up from 242 issued in 2012. New commercial projects, although down slightly from last year, are up 48% in value. Total number of permits are up 9% for the year – from 2,871 in 2012 to 3,126 in 2013. Total value of all permits issued is up 44% - from $109,284,050 in 2012 to $157,134,162 in 2013.

SIERRA BANCORP ANNOUNCES MANAGEMENT TRANSITION

The Board of Directors of Sierra Bancorp, parent of Bank of the Sierra, announced the promotion of Kevin J. McPhaill to president and chief operating officer of the company and the bank, effective January 1. James C. Holly, current president and CEO, will continue to serve as CEO of the company and the bank.

Holly explained that the board has temporarily separated the offices of president and CEO to allow for an orderly management succession with minimal disruption, and it is anticipated that McPhaill will ultimately be named president and CEO. The timing for the transition has not yet been determined.

TULARE COUNTY BRANCH LIBRARIES TO SHOW HOLIDAY FILMS

During the school vacation, Tulare County Library branches that are equipped to show movies will feature children's holiday films during the hours they are open. The branches that will have movies available are Alpaugh, Earlimart, Exeter, Ivanhoe, Lindsay, Orosi, Strathmore and Tipton.

For more information on the branch hours and films, call the main library at 713-2700 or the branches listed.

OLMOS NAMED FHCN'S 2012 ANITA DE LA VEGA AWARD RECIPIENT

Family HealthCare Network announced that Isabel Olmos, community advocate, has been selected as the recipient of the 2013 Anita de la Vega Community Service Award, which was established in memory of Anita de la Vega, a clinician who served at FHCN for 30 years.

The award honors a local resident who has dedicated their life to serving the underserved communities in Tulare County to assure that they have access to resources and services in their communities.

"I am humbled and honored to receive this blessing," said Olmos, who has been with FHCN since 1999, but previously served on the FHCN Board of Directors from 1985 to 1994.

As a community advocate, she has dedicated her life to working with families, in particular low income and migrant farm working families. She is currently on the board of Self-Help Enterprises and Comisíon Honorifica, and an Ambassador of the Porterville Chamber of Commerce.

FINANCIAL CREDIT NETWORK PRESENTED OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Financial Credit Network, Inc., a full-service collection agency headquartered in Visalia, was recently honored by the California Association of Collectors as the recipient of their Outstanding Public Service Award.

A few of the projects that Financial Credit Network supports are: Ann's Kids for Christmas, Habitat for Humanity, Visalia Emergency Aide's Race Against Hunger, Big Brother Big Sisters' Bowl for Kid's Sake and the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT GIVE AND TAKE

Main Street Hanford and various friends of downtown are again sponsoring the "Christmas Ornament Give and Take" in downtown Hanford. Families in need of decorative ornaments may collect one or more to enhance their own Christmas decorating through December 26.

Organizers are asking you to bring a used or new ornament to hang on the fence surrounding the former location of historic Vendome Hotel Building on Irwin and Eighth Street. The landmark building was destroyed by fire in July 2012. Construction on the new building, which will include seven ground floor retail spaces and several apartments on the second floor, is scheduled to begin in January, according to property owner Sid Sharp.

LEADERSHIP FARM BUREAU PROGRAM GRADUATES TWO FROM TWO TULARE COUNTY

Two Tulare County residents were among the 10 Farm Bureau members from throughout California who earned recognition for completing the Leadership Farm Bureau program. Following a year of intensive training, the Leadership Farm Bureau Class of 2013 graduated at an event held during the 95th California Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in Monterey.

Among its activities, the Leadership Farm Bureau class participated in an advocacy trip to Washington, D.C. Class members also visited North Carolina, allowing participants to compare and contrast their experiences in California with those of farmers and ranchers in another part of the country.

The two local 2013 Leadership Farm Bureau graduates were Carrie Crane, program coordinator for the Tulare County Farm Bureau; and Karen Whaley, cattle rancher, agricultural investment specialist and state YF&R Committee member.

COUNTY AGENCY ISSUES HEPATITIS WARNING

Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency has issued a warning from the FDA that advises consumers to discontinue dietary supplements labeled OxyElite Pro and VERSA-1 because they are potentially linked to acute hepatitis.

More than 50 cases of acute non-viral hepatitis nationwide are being investigated by the FDA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), along with state and local health officials. These dietary supplements, distributed by USP Labs LLC of Dallas and containing aegeline, have been indicated in a link between usage and a number of the liver illnesses reported in Hawaii and other states. Some of these products may have been sold within Tulare County or purchased by mail order.

Symptoms of acute hepatitis include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, clay colored bowel movements, joint pain, yellow eyes and jaundice. Contact your health care practitioner immediately if you believe you have been harmed by using a dietary supplement.

FHCN'S FARMERSVILLE HEALTH CENTER RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Family HealthCare Network (FHCN) announced that its health center in Farmersville has been recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) as a Level 3 Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH). This is the highest level of recognition granted by the NCQA. This is the organization's 11th health center to receive this national recognition for quality and team based coordinated care.

"We are very proud of the Farmersville health care team for achieving this prestigious recognition," said Kerry Hydash, president and CEO.

FHCN's Farmersville health center is located at 730 N. Farmersville Blvd.

SIERRA VIEW DISTRICT HOSPITAL AWARDED ACCREDITATION

Sierra View District Hospital has earned the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for accreditation by demonstrating compliance with its national standards for health care quality and safety in hospitals.

Sierra View District Hospital underwent a rigorous, unannounced on-site survey in August. A team of Joint Commission expert surveyors evaluated Sierra View for compliance with standards of care including infection prevention and control, leadership and medication management.

"With Joint Commission accreditation, we are making a significant investment in quality on a day-to-day basis from the top down," said Donna Hefner, Sierra View District Hospital's president and CEO. "The survey process serves as a validation, which evaluates our compliance with the standards of care ensuring high quality and safe care for our community.

VISALIA RESCUE MISSION AVAILABLE DURING COLD TEMPERATURES

As the cold winter temperatures begin to impact our community, the city of Visalia wants to ensure that those in need have a place to stay during the coldest nights. In cooperation with the Visalia Rescue Mission, the city encourages anyone who needs emergency shelter when the nighttime temperatures are expected to be below 30 degrees Fahrenheit to seek shelter at the Visalia Rescue Mission.

In addition, the mission has now opened a "40 Degree" Center at its new community center for nights when the temperature is expected to be 40 degrees or below. The community center is located at 741 N. Santa Fe, Visalia, and will provide blankets and staff to monitor the open room.

CAL WATER PRESENTS CHECKS TO LOCAL CHARITIES

As part of its continuing effort to improve the quality of life in the communities it serves, on December 16, local water provider California Water Service Company presented checks for $10,000 to the Visalia Rescue Mission and to Community Services & Employment Training.

According to District Manager Scott Bailey, charitable contributions do not come from water rates, but from the company's shareholders.

"It is important to us to be a good corporate citizen and support organizations that make this a better place to live," he said. "Our shareholders know that this means investing in worthwhile organizations like this one."

The Visalia Rescue Mission provides food and shelter for those in need and operates a recovery program for individuals dealing with addiction. Community Services & Employment Training works to reduce poverty through education and training.

Cal Water serves about 128,700 people through 42,800 service connections in Visalia. The company has provided water service in the area since 1927. Additional information may be obtained at www.calwater.com.

Rawhide GM Pendergraft Named Cal League Female Executive of the Year

Visalia Rawhide General Manager Jennifer Pendergraft was named the California League's Female Executive of the Year at the Baseball Winter Meetings in Orlando, Florida.

California League President Charlie Blaney presents award to Visalia Rawhide General Manager Jennifer Pendergraft.

Pendergraft, who recently completed her first season as GM and her seventh with the club, led the organization to a highly successful 2013.

The Rawhide recorded the third highest attendance in franchise history, despite playing 20 home games in over 100-degree heat – the hottest season in 30 years in Visalia.

The ballclub also hosted over 50 non-game events at Recreation Ballpark in 2013 (a new club record), including IrishFest, Oktoberfest, Wish Upon a Star's BraveFest, a video game tournament and many others.

In the community, Pendergraft spearheaded the Rawhide's leadership role, helping to create the Character Counts program, which provided the framework for players speaking to more than 3,000 kids. She also established a Mentorship Program for the development of players' public speaking skills. Meanwhile, the Host Family program that she created several years ago once again had 100 percent of players living with host families.

The honor continues an award-filled 15 months for the Rawhide, who were named California League Organization of the Year in 2012 and Visalia Medium Business of the Year in 2013. Team President Tom Seidler was also California League Executive of the Year in 2012.

Congressmen Demand Action to Increase California Water Supplies

"It continues to be unacceptable that our constituents do not get the water they contract and pay for in full," said Congressman Kevin McCarthy, after sending a letter to Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker demanding they take action to increase water supplies for Central and Southern California. "Our state needs an affordable and reliable water supply to ensure a strong and vibrant economy, and I call on the administration to take immediate action to increase vital water supplies for our communities."

Current projections for water allocations could be as low as 0% for Central Valley Project (CVP) contractors and 5% for California State Water Project (SWP) contractors due to dry conditions that have been exacerbated by water export restrictions over the years that are a result of environmental regulations in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta. This letter was signed by Reps. Valadao, Nunes, Rohrabacher, Royce, Campbell, Calvert and Gary Miller.

The letter asked the secretaries to: (1) take immediate action within their agencies' power to increase water supplies; (2) develop a 2014 operational plan for the CVP and SWP that maximizes water supplies to the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California; and (3) asks for the administration's plan to ensure an affordable and reliable water supply over the next decade while long-term solutions to California's manmade water crises continues.

Assembly Republicans Launch 'Guide to Paying for College'

California Assembly Republicans announced the creation of new financial aid guide – payingforcollegeca.com – an online resource to help California students learn about scholarships and grants available to them as they seek ways to pay for college.

"It is a tragedy that the dream of a higher education is out of reach for too many young people because they can't afford it," said Assembly Republican Leader Connie Conway, of Tulare. "Keeping higher education affordable for California's students is an important priority for Assembly Republicans and that's why we've put together this new online guide to paying for college."

Assembly Republican Leader Connie Conway

On the online "Guide to Paying for College," students can learn about state, federal and private scholarship resources in a convenient one-stop shop. Included on the site are:

- A downloadable "financial aid checklist" with the steps that students must take in the months before they start school to apply for and receive the aid they need to pay for college;
- Detailed information on available state and federal financial aid, including a step-by-step guide on how to apply for Cal Grants;
- Resources on financial aid programs available for California's veterans and military families; and
- Information on hundreds of different private scholarships available to students.

Assembly Republicans have continually fought to make higher education a top budget priority and increase college affordability for California's students. Among the measures proposed by GOP lawmakers this session are:

- Assembly Bill 67 (Olsen, Gorell and Chávez) would freeze tuition at UC and CSU campuses for the next four years.
- Assembly Bills 51 and 181 (Logue) would create a pilot program for certain college majors to earn Bachelor's degrees for no more than $10,000 at a CSU campus and no more than $20,000 at a UC campus, including the costs of textbooks.
- Assembly Bill 1085 (Gaines and Morrell) would restore full Cal Grant awards for thousands of private school students whose Cal Grants are scheduled to be reduced starting in the 2013-14 school year.
- Assembly Bill 13 (Chávez) would allow recently discharged, released or retired members of the Armed Forces living in California, to attend a California State University or a California Community College while paying in-state tuition for up to one year.

"California's students must have access to an affordable college education so they can meet the demands of employers and get a good-paying job," said Conway. "Our new website will hopefully help more students receive the financial assistance they need to pay their tuition bills and receive the strong foundation they need to succeed in whatever field they choose."

American Dream Still Alive for Young Renters

Despite the financial toll the recent financial crisis has had on Americans, renters continue to hold homeownership in high esteem, and it remains a goal for the majority of them, according to the California Association of Realtors (C.A.R.) "2013 Renter Survey."

Nearly three-quarters of renters rated homeownership as "important," and more than half of renters (52 percent) said they plan to buy a home in the future, as nearly all see the advantages of owning versus renting.

"It's encouraging that the majority of renters still believe buying a home is a good investment, even after the adverse effects of the Great Recession," said C.A.R. President Kevin Brown. "Renters clearly see the benefits of owning a home, citing building equity, freedom to do what they want with their home, pride of ownership, stability and tax deductions as the top advantages of homeownership."

The survey, the first rental survey by C.A.R., was conducted by telephone to 800 home renters statewide from April 26-May 25. The survey was also conducted online to 875 home renters statewide in August. Demographic profiles of the two sets of respondents varied some, with the most significant difference being their age. The median age of online respondents was 39 and was 45 for telephone respondents.

While almost half of all respondents believed that gaining equity and investing for their future and their children's future was an advantage of homeownership, online respondents were twice as likely to carry that belief. Online respondents were also three times as likely to believe in freedom gained from homeownership and were twice as likely to take pride and feel satisfaction from owning something of their own.

There are other interesting differences between online and telephone respondents. Among online respondents to the survey, 33 percent indicated having outstanding student loans, with 84 percent averaging less than $10,000 of student loan debt. Fourteen percent of telephone respondents had outstanding debt, with 17 percent owing more than $50,000.

Additionally, telephone respondents are more stationary and are less likely to move in the near future. Meanwhile, more than one-third (35 percent) of online respondents plan to move within the next couple of years. Online respondents, for various reasons, are also more likely to see significant increases in their rents, with 17 percent indicating their most recent rent increase was more than 20 percent.

Twenty-six percent previously owned a primary residence, and 6 percent currently own real estate. Of those who previously owned a home, the reasons for selling include: needed to move for family reasons (24 percent), foreclosure (14 percent), needed to move for work (13 percent), short sale (11 percent) and bankruptcy (3 percent).

Other key findings include:

- Most renters (44 percent) who expressed the desire to own instead of rent were only renting out of financial necessity and the majority plan to buy in the next three years or longer.
- Renters mentioned a lack of building equity (24 percent), the inability to make changes to their living environment (14 percent), and unpredictable rent increases (15 percent) as the top three things they dislike about renting.
- The majority of respondents prefer to buy a single-family home over condominiums, townhomes, and other types of residences, with 77 percent indicating they plan to purchase a single-family home. Online respondents however are more likely to plan to purchase a townhouse, condo, or a mobile home, with 26 percent saying so, while only 19 percent of telephone respondents indicated planning a purchase of a townhouse, condo or a mobile home.
- More than four out of every 10 renters (41 percent) indicated they plan to purchase in the same county where they currently reside, and 14 percent plan to buy in the same neighborhood.
- Currently, about half (51 percent) of all renters live in an apartment, with the remainder residing in a single-family home, a townhouse, or a condominium.
- Renters are creatures of habit, with the average tenure in a residence being more than eight years.
- Lastly, when asked if they intend to use a realtor to make their home purchase, telephone respondents were more likely to use one, and half of online respondents did not know if they would use a realtor. Online respondents were also twice as likely to begin their search for a home online, while telephone respondents were almost equally likely to begin online and talk to a real estate agent. Seventy-four percent of those that say they will begin their search online also say they plan to use a realtor.

You, Your Vitality System and the Holiday Season

KAY PACKARD

Knowing what your Life Line has to say about you can help you elevate from grumble to grace during this holiday season. In hand analysis, the length, shape and quality of this line are associated with the physical body, awareness of and attention to the physical world. Your Life Line indicates your ability to get-up-and-go and your needs for rest and rejuvenation. This line is one of the three major lines in the palm. The other two major lines are the Heart and Head Lines. The Life Line is carved on the inside of the hand around the mound where the thumb connects to the palm (see figure 1).

Let me put one myth to rest - the length of the Life Line does not predict the length of one's life. It does show concerns about protection and preservation of the body. This is considered the line of family and tribe because we build our physical constitution within our tribe. As humans, we look to our community for support and safety. As we feel safe in our clan, our core energy system is more likely to be in balance.

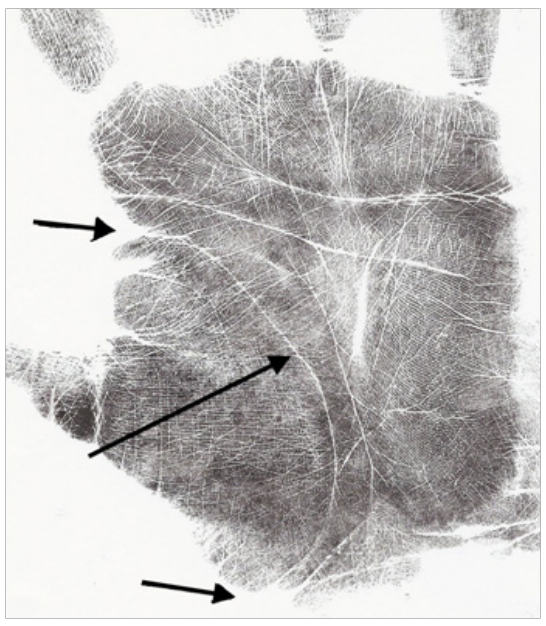


Fig. 1 Arrows pointing to a long and curving Life Line

The Life Line is associated with the element of the Earth and is associated with roots and productivity. If you have a long, clear and deep Life Line, you are down to earth, with a strong sense of security and stamina for living. Likewise, if you have a short or hard-to-see Life Line (figure 2), you will feel a constant restlessness, a bit edgy, with a tendency to "fly." You may be living on the surface of life, staying busy, but not really "digging in" and planting yourself.

As a professional hand analyst, I read the Life Line for:

- Personal vitality
- Stability and energy management
- Physical strength and stamina; vigor and verve
- Relationship to the sense of physical safety

Long, clear and unobstructed Life Lines, as in figure 1, belong to people who are in sync with their environment and maintain stability in their physical body even under stressful situations like shopping at Costco on a Sunday afternoon. There is a natural rhythm in the routine activities of life. They dig in and live life to the fullest surrounded by the natural elements such as mountains, rivers, trees and parks.

If your Life Line is long, deep and clear you are strong in vitality and physical condition. You have a robust nature and staying power. You are tuned into your body and effectively utilize your energy system, like rock climbers, marathon runners, skiers and yoga gurus.

During this holiday season, you may be the one to corral the family for a hike, an outdoor BBQ (even if it's 50 degrees) or drive to Sequoia National Park. Keep in mind; this may not be everyone's dream for a family gathering. While your stamina is high, do keep to your routine as much as possible so that you don't become resentful.

If your Life Line is short, delicate and scattered, like figure 2, you have difficulty resting. Your personal anchor and grounding system has been compromised. You may be quite familiar with living in a routine of "flight." You might feel like you're constantly scrambling to get life in order: "There is not enough time to get it all done."

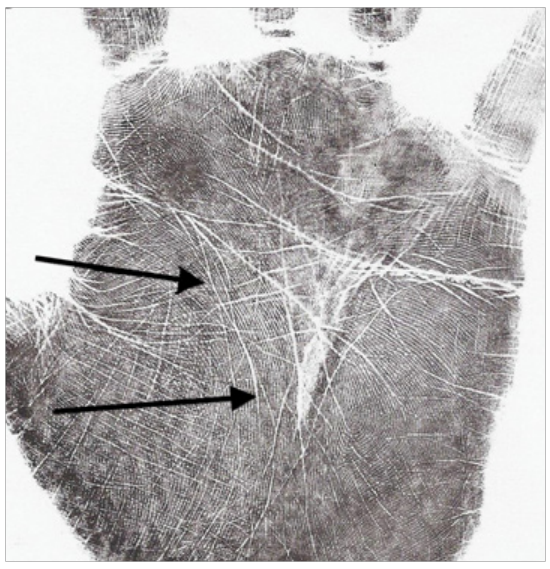


Fig. 2 Life Line – Reluctant to rest

Core survival issues play havoc in your life and family. At worst, the sense of support from family is severely lacking which creates a shortage of trust in the tribal system. If your tribal system is at risk you will most likely question your contributions to and position in society, asking, "Do I belong here?"

Doubt in one's role in the community can cause anxiety and internal tension that, in turn, creates a deep-seated urge to create safety and to keep others safe. When this is recognized, understood and addressed that owner can successfully implement a plan for poise and stability on a regular basis.

Kay Packard

Short and weak Life Line rescue kit: Take ample time to renew. Heed the call of restlessness and take a deep breath. Schedule time in your routine to plant your feet on the ground by taking walks or hiking. Gravitate to authentic members in your village.

In summary, if you own of a short Life Line, you can transcend grumble to grace by setting personal agreements for well-deserved rest and renewal. If you have a long, well-etched Life Line, you can bring the outdoors inside if the family doesn't share in your zest for the environment. In either scenario, remember this is a time to relish in our tribal bonds in gratitude for the security of the root established in our community.

Kay is a Master Hand Analyst who lives in Three Rivers. For more information, visit www.KayPackard.com

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MOONEY GROVE'S CATS
YOUR RESPONSES ONLINE

"If the Mooney Grove cats continue to be killed, due to the lack of concern for living creatures by Supervisor Phil Cox and others, my next vote will be for, without doubt, ANOTHER candidate. Ms. Amy King should have to appear before a review board to justify her actions against Ms. Monfross and if found inappropriate, loose her job as a result. The county can't even site cost as a factor since it is costly to destroy even one cat from the park colonies, while supporting the cat colonies is volunteerism at it's best. It appears that Supervisor Cox doesn't have a compassion for animals, which leads me to question if perhaps he's quite likely not too keen about the value/preservation of all life. It takes a cold heart to kill any living thing needlessly.

Kudo's to Dr. Weber and the volunteers. Shame on the SPCA for buckling under pressure."

— *Donna Johnston*

"This just makes me sick. Neil Pilegard needs to be fired from his job and arrested for hunting at Mooney Grove! The Tulare County Board of Supervisors needs to do something to stop the killing or we need to vote in people who will."

— *Lisa Kucala*

"Bad enough that they waste our money, but why are the allowing the Park Manager to hunt the geese with his Bow and Arrow???? We'd be arrested if we tried that."

— *"JannyM"*

"I am so outraged at what is going on at Mooney Grove. Why are they killing the cats and kittens? That is uncalled for. They are not mice or some rodent to just eliminate. This man Neil Pilegard needs to be fired. What gives him the right to torture and kill these animals? Why is it legal for him to hunt down the cats and the geese? I know any person who commited such a crime in a neighborhood would be prosecuted. We cannot just kill geese nor cats!!! I want to help. What can I do to help save these animals. They did not get to the park on their own. It is pet owners who do not take responsibility and who take the easy way out by abandoning their animals. I have many cats and dogs and each one of them I saved because someone had dropped them off. I will not stand for this killing spree. There is no reason for the park to turn down volunteers who feed the animals and who spay and neuter them through the TNR program. They are vaccinated and many peple enjoy animals. I know I do and the geese and ducks were always a delight at the park. It Mr Pilegard has that much hatred towards the animals at the park then maybe he should resign. If there are others who are upset over the killing spree at the park then maybe we should all get together and fight for the animals there. I will be looking into the laws now because it seems like this should be against the law on so many levels. And some people do adopt older cats so the ones who are a little more tame should get a chance to be adopted. There is no excuse for killing kittens…they can always be tamed and adopted out. I have done it with many cats for over 20 yrs."

— *Lori Shepherd*

"Trapping and killing costs the county $185 per cat and is inhumane while TNR is free and humane. What is wrong with our Tulare County Board of Supervisors? Why are they wasting our tax dollars?"

— *Mary Lou Zupp*

"It's a crime what government does to homeless companion animals. I feel for them all. Great article, Catherine; however, it's Mooney Grove, not Mooney's."

— *"An Oldtimer"*

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Black Tie

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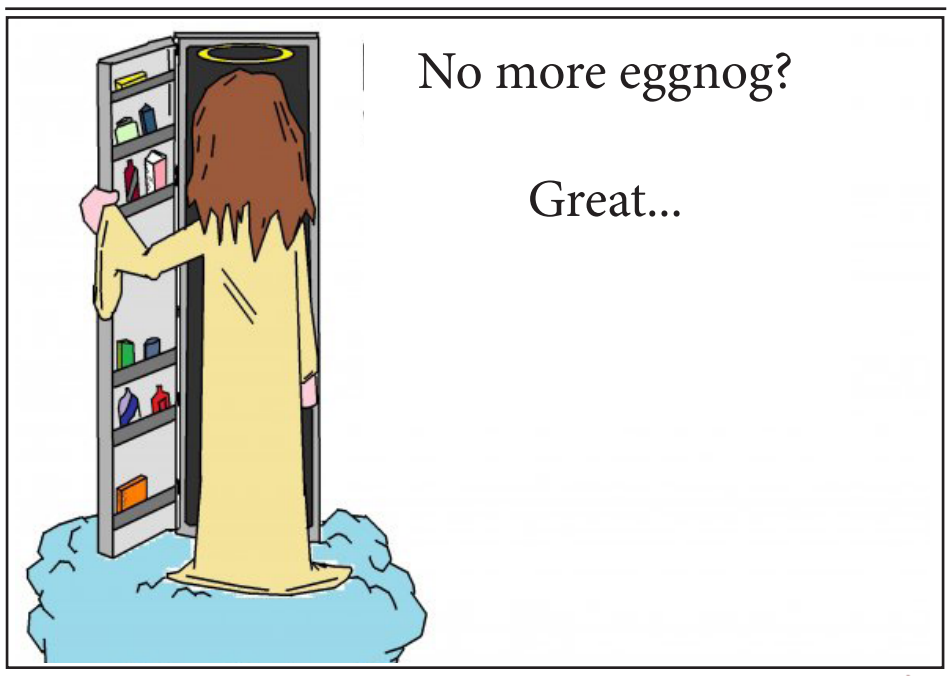

Another Close Shave

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the manse
not a creature was stirring, not even the ants.
Instructions were spread on the floor in Chinese,
in hopes that assembly would happen with ease.

The presents were piled by the tree in a heap,
each one to be wrapped while the kids were asleep.
And mamma on the sofa, and I on my duff,
had been at it for hours and just called, "Enough!"

When out from the kitchen there glided our daughter,
who'd silently risen for a glass of water.
Away to her side stiff of limb I did trundle,
and put her to bed, all safe in a bundle.

The house like the moon in the night now fell quiet
as monks uncomplaining while on a strict diet;
when, what to my wondering ears should I hear,
but the sound of mamma cracking open a beer,

who burped after taking the tiniest sip,
with a come-hither look and a hand on her hip.
With only crow's feet and some laugh-lines to date her,
we kissed by the light of the refrigerator:

"Here's to you! Here's to me! Here's to all of our kids!"
Then she giggled at me and winked with both lids!
On top of the counter she sat on her bottom,
recalling the children, and how we got 'em.

As dry as my throat was I nodded my head,
and we sped, hand-in-hand, up the stairs to our bed,
when, from a tree came the cry of our feline,
I made to the window the speediest beeline.

I tore open shutters, and threw up the sash,
to find Mr. Whiskers eschewing his stash.
Far out on a branch he had dragged, like some leopard,
one leg of our turkey, although it was peppered;

his fur was disheveled beyond any measure,
and he grinned at me like the more famous Cheshire:
but the look I mistook for self-satisfaction,
became in the moonlight a need of extraction.

He was caught by a forepaw in the smallest crook,
and I could tell he was stuck with no second look.
His eyes, how they darted! How he struggled and howled!
And mamma stood behind me, shook her head, and scowled.

"That miserable cat," she said, "I just fed him!
Don't stand there staring, Murphy. Damn it, go get him!"
Far into the night I leaned forward, reaching
for Mr. Whiskers, who now sat beseeching,

when two things occurred at one time, if you will:
I fell out, while he leapt in safe, over the sill.
Below, I was sprawled on my back on the fescue.
Now who, let me ask you, needed a rescue?

Aghast, I regarded the twinkling night stars,
hearing only the wind and the passing of cars,
and for a split-second I thought I was dead;
until, I remembered, the pain in my head.

And if not for the snow that lay hither and yon,
I'd have hit the doctor's after hitting the lawn.
In the end, of course, Mr. Whiskers was saved;
myself, so was I-- 'twas another close shave.

— *Murphy*

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The Sons of the San Joaquin

Sons of the San Joaquin to Headline Visalia Fox Theatre

The upbeat, airtight, three-part family harmonies of the Sons of the San Joaquin are being heard in a lot more places these days. This sound has carried Joe, Jack and Lon Hannah from church and community gatherings to places like Switzerland, where traditional cowboy music is even more revered than modern country music. In the Arabian Peninsula, they found enthusiastic receptions from people who regard their own traditions to be a close parallel to our cowboy heritage.

And on Saturday, December 31, at 3pm, the Sons of the San Joaquin will take the stage of the Visalia Fox Theatre for their annual Christmas concert.

The Sons of the San Joaquin sound first took shape in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, where the Hannah family had moved from depression-era Missouri. "There were some prominent cattle ranches there," says Jack, "and that's where our romance with cowboys began. Our dad became a fan of the Sons of the Pioneers back in the 1930s, and he'd sing a lot of those songs. We learned our first ones from him, and became great fans of theirs, too."

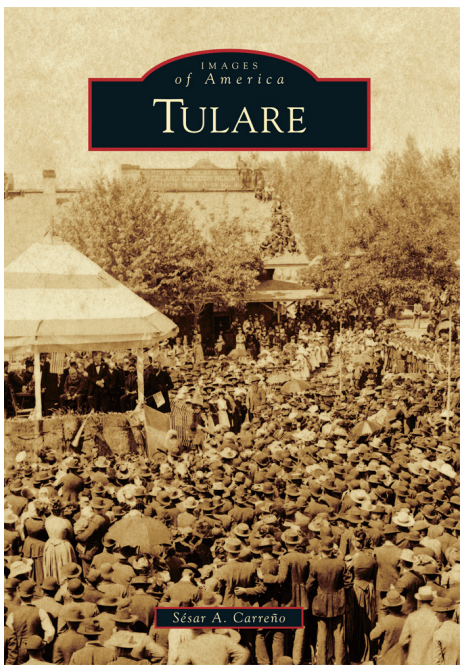
Joe and Jack performed with their family at local gatherings and eventually

Continued on p. 24 »

Local Author Shares History and Photographs of Tulare in New Book

The newest addition to Arcadia Publishing's "Images of America" series is *Tulare* from local author Sésar A. Carreño. The book, released on Monday, boasts more than 200 vintage images of the early days of Tulare.

Tulare was originally founded by the Southern Pacific Railroad as the terminal for its southern division. The railroad billed Tulare as the future county seat, but in 1891, Southern Pacific moved its roundhouse and machine shops to Bakersfield, and division headquarters to Fresno. In spite of this, Tulare managed to reinvent itself from a rough-and-tumble frontier town to an agricultural bedroom community. This book showcases some of Tulare's images from the 1880s up until today, capturing its development from railroad town to the modern era.



Highlights of *Tulare* include rarely seen images, the majority of which were donated by the Visalia Branch of the Tulare County Library, stories and scenes of historical events, and tales of early Tulare pioneers.

Carreño, who has always had a great interest in local history and California history, is a resident of Tulare and currently teaches eighth grade at Earlimart Middle School, and in the evenings at Tulare Adult School and Sierra Vista High School.

He graduated in 1993 from Los Angeles Pierce College in Woodland Hills, and in 1995, he received his bachelor's degree from California State University. He attended UCLA and CSUN for his teacher's preparation program. In the fall of 2006, he received his master's in education from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix.

Carreño has written and collaborated on many newspaper articles which have been published in the *Pasadena Weekly* and *Downtown L.A. News*.

Continued on p. 24 »

Local Events Help Tulare and Kings Counties Ring in New Year

So you don't want to stay home on New Years' Eve. Maybe you've decided it's not as much fun watching the TV celebrations without Dick Clark (or maybe without Guy Lombardo). You want to get out and about and have some fun. What to do? What to do?

Well, here are a few choices:

GI Forum - New Year's Eve Dance

Los Valley Guys and New Breed will perform at the American G.I. Forum New Year's Eve Dance at the Visalia Convention Center. The event runs from 7:30pm to 1am. Call 713-4040 for tickets or more information.

The Black & White Ball with DJ Ren Rock

Black and white formal wear is highly encouraged for this 9pm event at The Cellar Door. Admission to the 21+ event is $20. (See article on page 19.)

Exeter New Year Celebration 2014

Exeter Lions Club will present the Doo-Dah Parade at 6:30pm, fireworks at 9pm and a concert by Branded Heart at 10pm. The event also features a kids zone, teen center, food court and beer garden. For more information, visit www.exeterlions.org.

"Roaring into the New Year" 2014 Fundraiser Party and Dance

The Kings Lions Club will host this event, featuring the Marie Wilson Band and free beer tasting, at the Hanford Civic Auditorium. Tickets are $30 presale/$35 at the door. VIP $200 passes include a reserved table, eight tickets and a bottle of champagne. Tickets are available online at www.flavorus.com/kings-newyear2014, or by calling 924-4417.

The Marie Wilson Band performs in Hanford.

"Adonis" will be featured at the Hanford Fox on December 21.

Cannes Festival Award Winner to Showcase Films at Fox Hanford

STEVE PASTIS

The Hanford Fox Theatre will present a showcase of films by David Dibble, a filmmaker from Hanford, at 2pm on December 21. The showcase will include "Adonis," his ten-minute film that has been winning awards at film festivals, including the Emerging Filmmaker Showcase at the Cannes Film Festival.

Adonis is a romantic comedy about a guy (James Snyder) who hires a dating service that supplies him with a cute dog named Adonis as a "chick magnet." The film includes a cameo by Ernie Hudson ("Ghostbusters," "Oz," "The Crow") and features an extraordinarily talented dog named Jimmy.

"He's a Hollywood-trained dog," Dibble explained. "The movie depends on the dog." Jimmy, who has been featured in movies, films and commercials, impressed everyone who attended the filming. "The cast and crew gave him a standing ovation after his scenes," Dibble said.

"The idea (for 'Adonis') came out about 10 years ago when a friend and I were trading rejection stories and saying that what we really needed was a dog," said Dibble, adding that the two were on the set of "Planet of the Apes" at the time, where they were working as extras. "We were gorillas," he admitted.

"Adonis" was shot on green screen, enabling Dibble to add the backgrounds later, which he did using real dollhouses, most bought on eBay, miniature landscapes and model railroads. The filming only took a week, but creating the backgrounds and combining them with the live action took about three years. Dibble's mother, Beverlee, painted and decorated the dollhouses and, along with his father, Tom, also built a few from kits.

"It was a very slow, painful process," he commented, but he knows he is doing exactly what he has wanted to do for a long time.

"I've been wanting to be a filmmaker since the seventh grade, so it's been a

Continued on p. 24 »

Bank of the Sierra's Annual Resolution Run to Benefit Visalia Rescue Mission

Bank of the Sierra will host its 2nd Annual Resolution Run on January 1 to help enhance the quality of life for Central Valley citizens in need. All proceeds from this event will go directly to help change lives in at the Visalia Rescue Mission.

"Many struggling Central Valley community members rely on the services of our local charities to help them through this economy," said Jim Holly, Bank of the Sierra President and CEO. "We are delighted to assist our neighbors and do our part to help those in need."

"For 32 years, the VRM has labored to address the most critical needs of the homeless in the Central Valley," said Danny Little, executive director of the Visalia Rescue Mission. "We are thrilled to partner with Bank of the Sierra to further these efforts in the Valley."

The Visalia Rescue Mission is a local non-profit organization which serves the local community by providing a homeless shelter for men, women and children; sleeps an average of 180 people each night; and serves three meals a day, 365 days a year. The mission is currently serving approximately 515 meals each day, and served more than 183,000 meals in 2012. Additionally, the mission operates a nine-month recovery program for men and women that includes a mentoring program, life-skill training as well as a job internship programs.

Bank of the Sierra is the largest independently owned community bank headquartered in southern San Joaquin Valley's heartland. The bank serves 17 different communities with 25 branches, two ag centers and one SBA center.

The 5K Resolution Run is scheduled for New Year's Day in Downtown Visalia. Runners and walkers are welcome, and a one-mile Kids Race will kick-off the festivities. For more information and registration, visit www.ValleyResolutionRun.com.

Young participants are ready to go in the Kids' Race at the first Resolution Run.

Winter Adult Volleyball League to Start in Visalia

Teams of friends, families and co-workers are currently being formed for the Winter Adult Volleyball League organized by the Visalia Parks & Recreation Department. Coed leagues are offered in both intermediate and open divisions, and games will be played six-on-six, with a maximum of 12 players per team. All matches will be played indoors in the Anthony Community Center Gymnasium, 345 N. Jacob St., Visalia.

Team registration is $235 and is open until Friday, December 27. Registrations submitted after this date will be accepted as space permits and will be charged a $25 late fee. The managers meeting will be held at 6:30pm on Thursday, January 2.

For more information, call 713-4365, visit www.liveandplayvisalia.com or email Adult Sports Coordinator Ramsey Ochoa at rochoa@ci.visalia.ca.us.

The High Sierra Jazz Band

High Sierra Jazz Band to Perform in Three Rivers on December 21

Nearing the end of its international tour, Three Rivers' own High Sierra Jazz Band is back home to gear up for a holiday performance at the Veterans Memorial Building in Three Rivers on December 21.

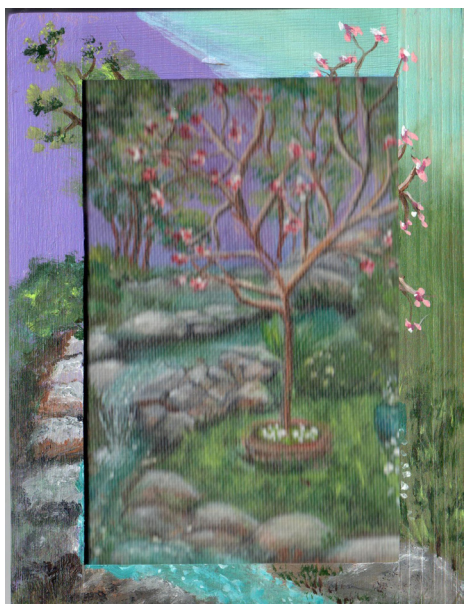
The High Sierra Jazz Band was formed in 1976 and has seen only a few changes in its long history. Of the six original band members, four still remain active members in the band.

Led by Pieter Meijers and his clarinet, the band's hard-driving West Coast sound is bolstered by the clean alpine air of Three Rivers. The band's continued success is a combination of experience, a book full of fine tunes and Meijers' dedicated leadership.

After gaining national recognition with the release of its first album in 1977, newspapers started praising the band's sound. According to George Brand, editor of the *San Luis Obispo Telegram-Tribune* at the time, "Three Rivers, a hamlet in the Sierra Nevada foothills, is not a likely spot in which to find a Dixieland jazz group whose two-beat rhythm is as freewheeling as a rollercoaster on greased rails, yet as precise as a mathematician's mind, but that's where you'll find the High Sierra Jazz Band in a fashion that compares favorably with jazz hall sounds in San Francisco, Chicago or New Orleans."

Since then, the band has been rated by an *American Rag* readers' poll as the second most popular traditional jazz band ever, just behind the Turk Murphy Band and ahead of the Duke Ellington Orchestra. The band's live performances and 27 albums have brought the art of traditional jazz to music enthusiasts all over the world.

The holiday performance is open to the public and starts at 2pm. Tickets are $10 at the door of the Veterans Memorial Building in Three Rivers. For more information, call 561-4549.



Visitors to the "Miniatures" exhibition will have a chance to win the artwork on display.

Tulare City Historical Society Hosts 'Miniatures' Exhibition and Fundraiser

The Tulare City Historical Society is hosting its 6th Annual "Miniatures" exhibition and fundraiser in the Audio-Visual Room of the Tulare Historical Museum through March 15, 2014. The exhibition features works of art that are 7" by 9".

Tickets to win art from the exhibition will be on sale in the museum gift shop. Tickets are $5 each or three for $10. Participants fill out tickets, choose their favorite artwork, and drop their tickets in the box. The drawing will be held on March 19, 2014. Winners, who need not be present to win, will be listed at www.tularehistoricalmuseum.org, notified by telephone or sent an email.

The museum is located at 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare. Hours of operation are 10am – 4 pm, Thursday – Saturday. Admission is $5 for adults, $3 for seniors 55+ and Southern California Automobile Club members, $2 for students, and free for Tulare City Historical Society members and children under 5 years old.

For more information, call 686-2074.

RECYCLE THIS PAPER
...OR AL GORE WILL CRY

DJ Ren Rock to Help Bring in New Year in Visalia

"The Central Valley's most popular DJ is, hands down, DJ Ren Rock," said Aaron Gomes, owner/operator of Sound N Vision Foundation, which is bringing the popular DJ back for his annual December 31 show. "Every year, his New Year's Eve Black & White Ball is a sold out event at the Cellar Door."

DJ Ren Rock, who mixes on-air on Fresno's B95 every Friday and Saturday, has a podcast series on iTunes and takes the stage at The Cellar Door on Saturday nights, started spinning records as a young teenager.

"I started DJ-ing when I was 13 and fell in love with the art of mixing music," he said, adding that he was first inspired while listening to the radio on a family trip to Disneyland. "I tuned into (Los Angeles station) Power 106 and noticed that the songs I was familiar with were being played in a different manner. The DJ, DJ Vice, was scratching and remixing live on the air. Once I heard that I was hooked. I saved up money washing cars and was able to buy my first set of turntables."

DJ Ren Rock

To some, perhaps of a different generation, a DJ is simply the one who selects and plays records. DJ Ren Rock was asked why some DJs are more popular than others.

"In a nightclub/party setting, basically the key is to keep the music going without having to 'stop' the dance floor to change songs," he replied. "This is done by matching the tempos of songs with the speed control on the turntable. Sounds simple but actually takes a lot of practice. Scratching is kind of the 'icing on the cake.' It's the sounds you hear when you move a record back and forth. The trick is to create musical patterns by turning the sounds on and off with a crossfader. There are so many other elements that make up the art of DJ-ing but those are the basics."

DJ Ren Rock has taught the art of mixing music at Visalia schools.

"I was lucky enough to be chosen as a DJ class instructor at Golden West and Mt. Whitney high schools," he said. "Although that opportunity ended due to budget cuts, I kept the relationships with many of my students and mentor them as they continue their pursuit of becoming DJ's themselves."

As a nightclub DJ, Ren Rock plans to travel more and more, "to see what's going on in bigger cities and bring some of those ideas back," but he has a special appreciation for Visalia and The Cellar Door.

"The Cellar Door is kind of a melting pot of different people with all kinds of different musical tastes, and I definitely use that to our advantage," he said. "Top 40 dance, hip-hop, classic rock... music from the 80s, 90s and sometimes even older than that! I take all of these kinds of sounds and mix them so that it makes sense in a nightclub setting."

The Cellar Door is located at 101 W. Main St., Visalia. The Black & White Ball begins at 9pm on Tuesday, December 31. Black and white formal wear is highly encouraged. Admission to the 21+ event is $20.

Foot of Feathers

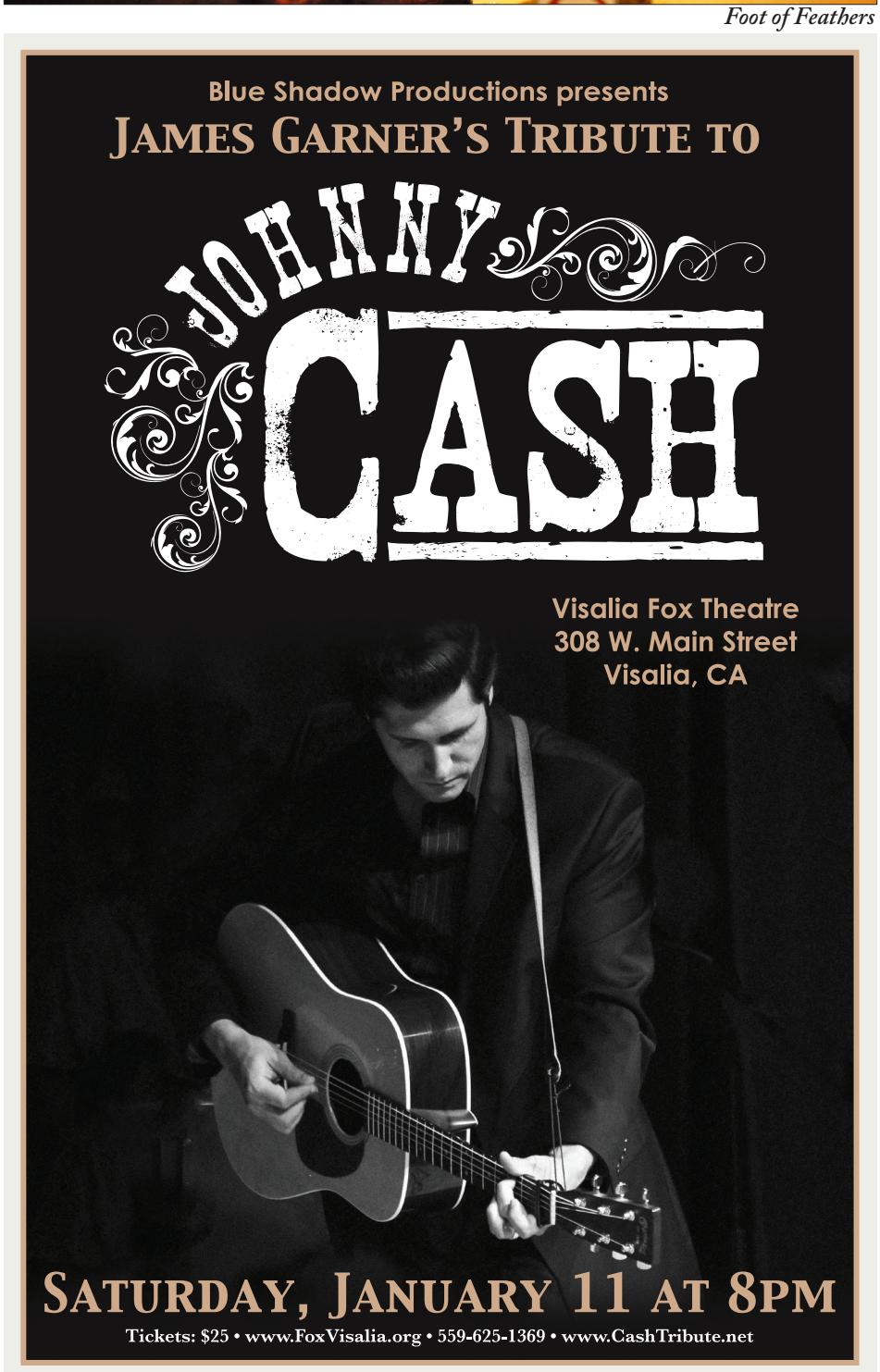
Foot of Feathers Returns to Cellar Door

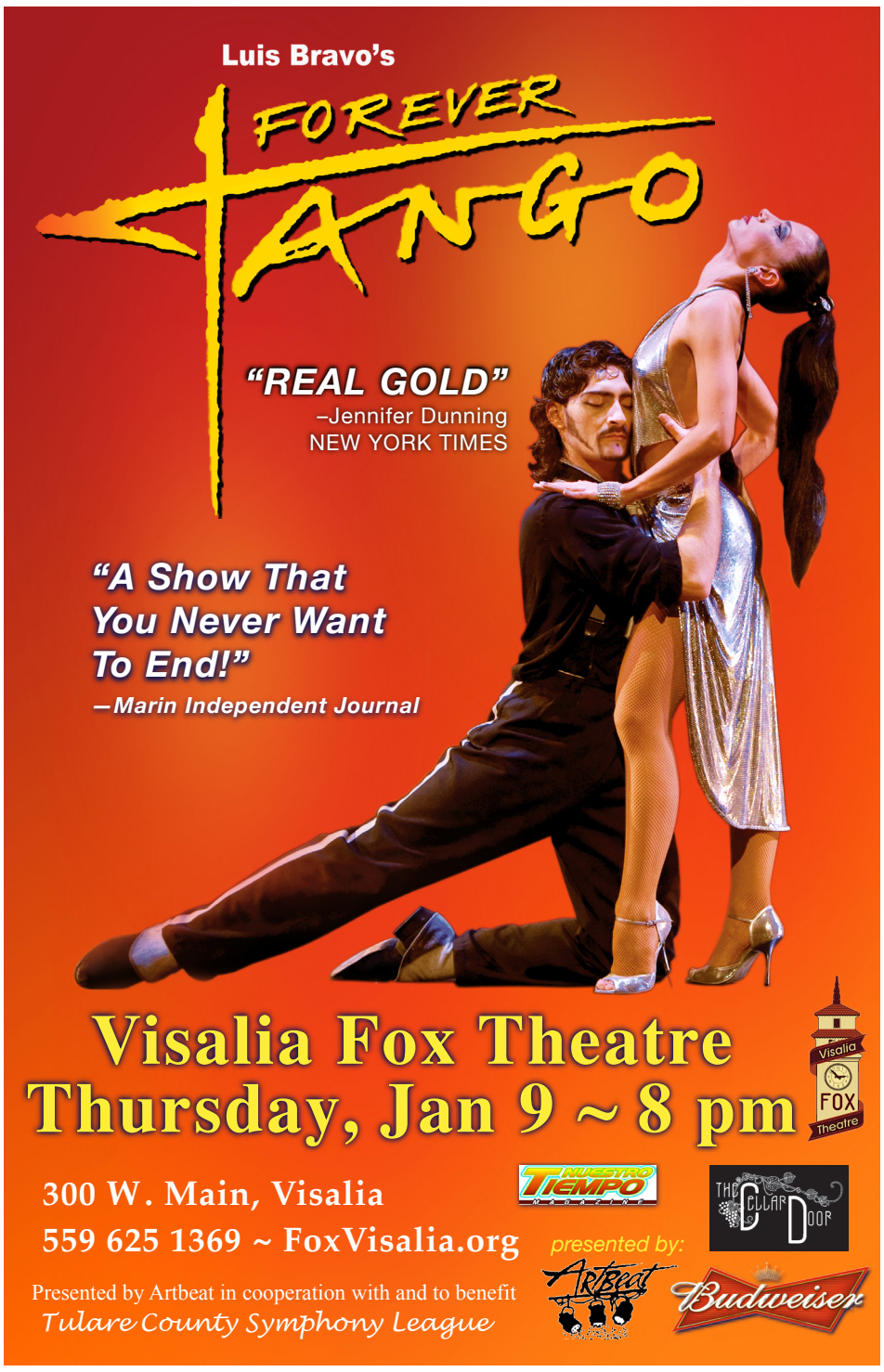
Foot of Feathers, which will headline The Cellar Door in downtown Visalia on Saturday, December 21, is made up of Kent Stahl (vocals/guitar), Aaron Estes (guitar/vocals), Eric Abbott (bass/vocals) and Matt Sampietro (drums/vocals).

The group is known for its four-part vocal harmonies, including a spot-on cover of the Beach Boys' "Sloop John B" the last time they played The Cellar Door. The guys twist and turn their extensive record collections to span a lot of ground, musing primarily on mid-tempo guitar rock.

Visalia natives (transplanted to the Central Coast) smAlls play the middle slot. The husband-wife team of Mark (guitar/vocals) and Pam Moore (drums) team up with lifelong buds Dave Linsey (guitar/vocals) and Bryan Cole (bass) for a loose rock ride that pulls heavy from underground 80s and 90s.

Bay Area power-pop twee band Little Hearts kick off the 7pm 21+ show. Admission is $5 or free with a wrapped toy.





EVENT CALENDAR

MUSIC EVENTS

December

Dec. 19 – 3's A Crowd – 7-10pm
On Thursdays, 3's A Crowd with Rosalinda Verde perform at Crawdaddys Visalia, 333 E Main Street. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

Dec. 20-21 – Keith and the Crawdads – 7-10pm
Every Friday and Saturday, Keith and the Crawdads are featured at Crawdaddys Visalia. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

Dec. 21 – Sons of the San Joaquin – 3pm
Sons of the San Joaquin, a trio composed of brothers, Joe and Jack Hannah, and Joe's son Lon, will perform western music celebrating the American Cowboy. Tickets for the event held at the Visalia Fox theater are $19-23. For information, visit foxvisalia.org.

Dec. 21 – Foot of Feathers – 7pm
Foot of Feathers with smalls and Little Hearts perform the early show at The Cellar Door in Visalia. For information, call 287-7067.

January

Jan. 5 – Danielle Belen 3pm
Virtuoso Violinist Danielle Belen will return after 3 years, to perform at the Main Street Theater in Visalia. For information and tickets, visit threeriversperformingarts.org.

Jan. 7 – Cody Torres – 7-10pm
On Tuesdays, singer and musician Cody Torres performs at Crawdaddys Visalia playing classic Country and Rock hits. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

Jan. 7 – Salsa Tuesdays – 7pm
Every Tuesday night at The Cellar Door features beginner dance lessons at 8pm, music and dancing follows. Cover is $5 for this 21+ event. Partners not required. For information, call 287-7067.

Jan. 8 – David Laswell and the Rounders – 7-10pm
On Wednesdays, its KJUG Country Music night and David Laswell and the Rounders at Crawdaddys Visalia, 333 E Main Street. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

Jan. 11 – Tribute to Johnny Cash – 8pm
James Garners' Tribute to Johnny Cash will be held at the Visalia Fox. For tickets and information, visit foxvisalia.org.

Jan. 15 – 3 Doors Down Benefit Concert – 7:30pm
3 Doors Down will perform in concert to benefit the Visalia Rescue Mission at Visalia Fox Theater. Tickets range from $30-60. For information and tickets, visit foxvisalia.org.

Jan. 18 – Locals Night – 7:30pm
Tulare County Symphony Orchestra's very own musicians take their turns as resident artists in front of the orchestra at the Visalia Fox Theatre, 308 W. Main St., Visalia. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

Jan. 18 – Celtic Rock with Tempest – 7:30pm
The Lindsay Community Theater will present Celtic Rock, a renowned hybrid of high-energy Folk Rock fusing Irish reels, Scottish ballads, Norwegian influences and other world music elements. For tickets, visit lindsaycommunitytheater.primetix.com.

Jan. 23 – Styx – 7:30pm
Styx will perform at the Visalia Fox Theater. Tickets, $36-86, are available at foxvisalia.org.
Jan. 24-26, 31 & Feb. 1,3, 7-9 – Respect, A Musical
Visalia Community Players will present "Respect, A Musical." For information, visit visaliaplayers.org.

Jan. 29 – Tommy Emmanuel – 7:30pm
Solo guitarist Tommy Emmanuel will perform at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets, $35-$125, are available at foxvisalia.org.

February

Feb. 2 – Duo W – 3pm
Violin and Cello Duo W take a fresh and engaging approach to classical music at the Main Street Theater in Visalia. For information and tickets, visit threeriversperformingarts.org.

Feb. 8 – American Brilliance – 7:30pm
Tulare County Symphony Orchestra celebrates the Bull Moose president Teddy Roosevelt with special guest Clay Jenkinson portraying and narrating the tough as nails president in composer Chris Brubeck's musical biography and tribute. For more information, visit tcsymphonyleague.org.

Feb. 22 – A Tribute to Legendary Ladies of Country Music – 7:30pm
The Lindsay Community Theater will present A Tribute to Legendary Ladies of Country Music, featuring Sonya Diane Jones. For tickets, visit lindsaycommunitytheater.primetix.com.

Feb. 28 – Audra McDonald Concert – 7:30pm
Two-time Grammy Award Winner Audra McDonald, a Valley native, will perform at the L.J. Williams Theater. For tickets visit, ticketfly.com.

March

March 6 – Merle Haggard – 8pm
Merle Haggard will perform at the Hanford Fox Theatre. Tickets, $55, $65 and $75, are available at foxhanford.com or 584-7823.

December

Dec. 19 – Lindsay Gardens Open House - Business Mixer – 5pm
Lindsay Chamber of Commerce and Lindsay Gardens will host an Open House/Business Mixer at 1011 W. Tulare Road. The event will feature networking, refreshments, door prizes and tours. Medi-cal and Medicare will be discussed.

Dec. 19 - Santa's Book Sale – 5-8pm
Read for Life will host Santa's Book Sale at Santa's Village in downtown Visalia, 205 W. Main St. New children's books will be for sale with a large selection discounted to prices as low as $2.99. Information: ReadforLife.org or 280-9374.

Dec. 20 – Academic Decathlon Sponsorship Entry Deadline
The deadline for sponsors to submit promotional materials for The Kings County Office of Education Academic Decathlon are due. Sponsors enable students to receive preparation materials, medals, certificate of participation and college scholarships. For information, vista kingscoe.org.

Dec. 20 – Word 2 – 8:30am
Tulare Public Library will hold a computer class on Microsoft Word. To register call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

Dec. 21 – Food for Fines
The Tulare Public Library will wave fines to all those who bring in non-perishable foods. (This doesn't include lost book or other charges.) Speak to staff at the Circulation Desk for more information.

Dec. 21 – Nutcracker Ball – 6-11pm
The Nutcracker Ball, a semi-formal dinner/dance, will be held at the Exeter Woman's Club, 201 Kaweah Ave. Silent auction, no host bar, and live music by Run 4 Cover will be featured. For information, call 592-6738 or visit exeterwomansclub.com.

Dec. 31 – Downtown Exeter New Year Celebration and Doo-Dah Parade – 5-9pm
Exeter Lions Club presents the parade, live music and family fun! For information, visit www.exeterlions.org.

Dec. 31 – GI Forum - New Year's Eve Dance – 7:30pm-1am
Los Valley Guys and New Breed will perform at the American G.I. Forum New Year's Eve Dance at the Visalia Convention Center. Call 713-4040 for information.

January

Jan. 1 – Annual Resolution Run
Bank of the Sierra will host their Second Annual Resolution Run to benefit the Visalia Rescue Mission in downtown Visalia. Runners and walkers are welcome and a 1-mile Kids race will kick-off the festivities. For information and registration, visit www.ValleyResolutionRun.com.

Jan. 3 – Tulare County Digital Photo Contest
Tulare County's Information & Communications Technology Department (TCiCT) is hosting the Second Annual Digital Photography Contest. The contest showcases the beauty of Tulare County. The deadline to enter is January 3 by 5pm. Information and entry forms available at tularecounty.ca.gov/tcict.

Jan. 3 - Alumni Hall of Fame Nomination Deadline
The deadline to submit nominations for The Fourth Annual Porterville College Foundation Hall of Fame is Jan. 3. The Banquet will be held March 8 at River Island Country Club. Nomination forms are available at the Porterville College Foundation website: portervillecollege.edu/foundation.

Jan. 4 – Friends of the Library Book Sale – 9am
The first Saturday of each month is the Friends of the Tulare Public Library used book sale.

Jan. 10 – Discover the Dinosaurs
Discover the Dinosaurs will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information visit visalia.org.

Jan. 15 – Master Gardener Training Class.
A 22-week science-based training course will be held from Jan. 15 through June 11. Master Gardeners are trained by the University of California Cooperative Extension to share research-based knowledge and information on home horticulture, pest management, and sustainable landscape practices in their communities. To register and for more information, visit cekings.ucanr.edu and click on Master Gardener.

Jan. 19 – A Bridal Odyssey – 11am-4pm
A Bridal Odyssey, Central Valley's longest running bridal show, will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information visit abridalodyssey.com.

Jan. 20 – Grangeville Rose Pruning Demonstration
UCCE Tulare/Kings Master Gardeners will hold a demonstration using IPM (Integrated Pest Management). For information, call 852-2735 on Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:30am.

Jan. 22 – 2014 Sexual Harassment Prevention Training – 7:30-10am
Visalia Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with Pacific Employers, will present the state mandated Sexual Harassment Prevention Training (SHPT) Seminar & Workshop with full breakfast at the Lamp Liter Inn in Visalia. California Assembly Bill 1825 (AB 1825) requires California employers with 50 or more employees to provide all personnel who have "Supervisory Authority" a minimum of two hours of Sexual Harassment Prevention Training every two years. The seminar will be offered on four days: Jan. 22, April 23, July 23 and October 22. Cost is $35 for Pacific Employers and Chamber members. Call the Visalia Chamber at 734-5876 for reservations.

Jan. 24 – COS Giants Baseball Banquet
Meet the Giants Dinner/Dance and Silent Auction, a fundraiser for the College of Sequoia's Baseball Team, will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information, visit baseball.cos.edu.

Jan. 24 – Lemoore Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet
Lemoore Chamber of Commerce will present awards for the citizen, business and organization of the year. Event and table sponsorship opportunities available by calling 924-6401.

Jan. 25 – Lindsay Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet – 6pm
The Lindsay Chamber Awards Banquet will honor individuals, businesses and organizations that have made a contribution to the community. The dinner will be held at McDermont Field House and Sports Center. For nomination forms and sponsorship information, visit thelindsaychamber.com.

Jan. 25 – Shred Event
Habitat for Humanity of Tulare County will host a Shred Event with ServiceMaster by Benevento to help businesses that need to get rid of paper clutter. For information, 734-4040.

Jan. 29 – 2014 Pistachio Day
The Statewide Pistachio Day Convention will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. The gathering delivers the latest research-based production practices for growers. Registration and information available at ucanr.edu/sites/pistachioday.

Jan. 30 – Bigger Better Events that Sell - 10am-12pm
As part of its Business Development Series, Lemoore and Hanford Chambers of Commerce will feature a presentation about powerful online tools that help make event promotion more effective. The event will be held at the Kings County Office of Education, Lemoore Conference Center, 876 E. "D" Street. For information, visit lemoorechamberofcommerce.com.

February

Feb. 2 – Super Bowl Sprint
The Creative Center will hold its annual Super Bowl Sprint. Walkers, runners and spectators welcome. For information visit, thecreativecenter-visalia.org.

Feb. 7-9 – Visalia Home & Patio Springfest
The 21st Annual Visalia Home & Patio Springfest, held at the Visalia Convention Center, will feature more than 350 home and garden displays. For information, visit VisaliaHomeShows.com.

Feb. 9 – 4th Annual Phylum Feast
As part of the Darwin Day celebration honoring science and critical thinking, the South Valley Skeptics will hold its 4th annual Phylum Feast in Visalia. For information and reservations visit sovalskeptics.org.

Feb. 11-13 – World Ag Expo 2014
The International Agri-Center will host the World Ag Expo in Tulare. For information, visit worldagexpo.com

Feb. 22 – Wine Auction
Exeter Chamber of Commerce is selling raffle tickets for a Wine Auction tree. The winner will receive 109 bottles of fine wine and everything else on the tree. Only 500 tickets will be sold. The drawing will be held at the Exeter Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards banquet. Winner need not be present to win. For tickets, $20, and information, visit exeterchamber.com.

March

March 1 & 29 and April 12 – Fireline Safety for Hired Vendors - 8am-5pm
Fireline Safety for Hired Vendors will take place March 1, March 29, and April 12 from 8am to 5pm in the PC Forum. Cost: $70 per person. The PC Fire Technology Department, the U.S. Forest Service and CAL FIRE will offer this one- day training that is required annually for operators of privately-owned equipment used to respond to active wild land fires. Pre-registration/payment required. or more information on Community Education Classes call 791-2492 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

March 8 — Fourth Annual Porterville College Foundation Hall of Fame Banquet
The Fourth Annual Porterville College Foundation Hall of Fame Banquet will be held March 8 at River Island Country Club, 31989 River Island Drive. Nomination forms are available at the Porterville College Foundation website: portervillecollege.edu/foundation.

March 29 — Hanford Garden Festival
UCCE Tulare/Kings Master Gardeners will have a display — Gardening 'Central Valley Style' — at the Hanford Garden Festival at the Hanford Mall. The displays will show how to grow different kinds of plants with an emphasis on water conservation, integrated pest management, and sustainable landscaping. For information, call 852-2735 on Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:30am.

April 25 – Administrative Professional Awards Luncheon
The Corcoran Chamber of Commerce will name the recipient of the 2013 Administrative Professional of the Year Award at the luncheon. For information, call 992-4514.

COMMUNITY

December

Dec. 19 - Quad Knopf Blood Drive 12-4pm
A blood drive will be held at Quad Knopf at 5110 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia. For information call the Visalia Blood Center at 302-1300.

Dec. 19 - Redwood Springs Healthcare Center Blood Drive 4-8pm
Redwood Springs Healthcare Center Blood Drive will be held at 1925 E. Houston Ave., Visalia. For information call the Visalia Blood Center at 302-1300.

Dec. 19 – Last Thursday Book Club – 6pm
The Last Thursday Book Club will discuss The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society. To register call 685-4503 or stop by the research and information desk.

Dec. 20 - Animal Health International Blood Drive - 9am-1pm
A blood drive will be held at 8711 W. Doe Ave., Visalia. For information call the Visalia Blood Center at 302-1300.

Dec. 20 - Sierra View District Hospital Blood Drive, 10am-2pm
A blood drive will be held at Sierra View District Hospital, Porterville. For information call the Visalia Blood Center at 302-1300.

Dec. 20 – Old Fashioned Christmas Luncheon – 11:30am-1pm
The Visalia Senior Center will host a lunch, fellowship and "glad tidings" with Christmas carols, activities and a Christmas luncheon. Special guests will perform. Tickets for the limited seating event go on sale Dec. 2 at $3.50 for ages 55 and over and $4.50 for guests. For information, 713-4381.

Dec. 21 – Sierra Traditional Jazz Club Christmas Party
The Sierra Traditional Jazz Club of Three Rivers will hold its annual Christmas Party at Three Rivers Memorial Building, corner of Sierra and Skyline drives. Bring finger food and snacks to share between sets. For information, visit jazzaffair.info.

Dec. 21–Farmer Boy - Tulare Blood Drive – 10am-2pm
A blood drive will be held at 1197 E. Prosperity Ave., Tulare. For information call the Visalia Blood Center at 302-1300.

Dec. 27 – Eagle Mountain Casino Blood Drive – 11am–8pm
A blood drive will be held at Eagle Mountain Casino, 681 S. Tule Road, Porterville. For information call the Visalia Blood Center at 302-1300.

January

Jan. 7-30 - Zumba - 6:30-7:30pm
A Porterville College Community Education course, Zumba, allows you to get fit while having fun. Zumba will take place Jan. 7-30 from 6:30 - 7:30pm Tuesdays and Thursdays. Cost: $20 per session. Look for more Zumba sessions each month. Register for classes in the Porterville College Business Office during business hours. For more information, call 791-2492 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

Jan. 9 – Philatelic Society Stamp Scramble – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society regular meeting and auction will also feature a Stamp Scramble at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer Street. Doors open at 6:15. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

Jan. 15 – Tulare Kings Master Gardeners Class
UCCE Tulare/Kings Master Gardeners will begin its Master Gardens class. For information, call 852-2735 on Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:30am

Jan. 21-May 14 - Exercise for the Community
A Porterville College Community Education course, Exercise for the Community, will be held Tuesdays from 7-8am and 8-9am in Rm. FIT 751 in the Fitness Center. Cost is $80. Register for classes in the Porterville College Business Office during business hours. For more information, call 791-2492 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

Jan. 23 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer Street. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

February

Feb. 6 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer St. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

Feb. 15 – Lemoore Kiwanis Valentine Dinner
The Lemoore Kiwanis will hold its Valentine Dinner. For information, 924-8811.

Feb. 20 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer St. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

March

Mar. 1 – Lemoore Lions Mongolian Barbecue
Lemoore Lions will hold a Mongolian Barbecue at the Civic Auditorium.

Mar. 13 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer St. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

See more events online

ourvalleyvoice.com

Joy Collier

Joy Collier Featured in Visalia and Three Rivers

ADINA ESCARSEGA

Joy Collier, an artist based in Springville, is also the publisher of Coffee News, which is distributed through many local businesses. Although she is a talented graphic designer, creating all the ads for her paper, her greatest passion is post-impressionistic painting.

Several of her Giant Sequoia paintings can be seen at the Clay Cafe in Visalia, and her work will be on display at the Comfort Inn & Suites in Three Rivers on the next two "First Saturday in Three Rivers" events, from 10am to 5pm on January 4 and February 5.

Collier, who has been painting since childhood, has been most influenced by the works of Cezanne and Monet. As a student of Taro Yashima in Los Angeles, she learned that art was the search of truth, something she has taken seriously ever since. She is still seeking her truth.

Originally having a passion for desert scape, Collier has most recently found her subject matter in painting the Giant Sequoia trees, one of the many influences that stimulate her creative mood.

"I have been watching a lot of HGTV home remodeling show where colorful and loose moods are right up my alley," she said. "I have always wanted my paintings to look like they just happened by accident and fell into place without sacrificing underlying form, as if you were transported to just that spot where it was painted from, you could look up and realize you were standing in that exact location."

Collier loves using natural colors in nature, yet paints them more saturated, giving them a much brighter feel.

"I am experiencing a convergence of technology, knowledge and creativity," she admits. "Now with the evolution of giclee prints (essentially canvas and ink that lasts 100 years), I can share my love of the Sequoias and California's unique landscape at an affordable price."

Collier's original paintings can cost up to $3,000, while her prints - made in four-foot and six-foot heights - range between $200 and $400, depending on the print.

Her work can be seen at numerous local events and venues, recently at Visalia's "Taste of the Arts" and at "First Saturdays" in Three Rivers. On First Fridays in Visalia, art enthusiasts can meet her in front of the Clay Café at 225 E. Main St.

For more information, visit www.joycollier.com.

'Favorite Places' to Feature Photography, Gourd Art

JERI BURZIN

Michael's Custom Jewelry in downtown Visalia may be one of your favorite places for beautiful jewelry and unique jewelry designs, cleaning and repair. Now it may also become a favorite place for viewing art and meeting local artists as well, since Michael's has joined the growing number of businesses that are enhancing the community and their business by adding local artwork to their location. Michael's began hosting Main Gallery artists in November, and starting January 3, Toni Best and I will be exhibiting our art at this venue.

Toni Best creates unique gourds.

Toni has become well known for her beautiful and unique gourds, and specializes in pine needle coiling that may be adorned with any number of unique items including feathers, elk horns, beads and more. Toni teaches classes at her studio in Visalia, and is involved with the upcoming "Baskets and Gourds, Containers of Our Culture" conference that is held every two years in Visalia. The conference offers many classes in various techniques of basketry with teachers coming to Visalia from all over the country. The next conference is April 25-27, when participants will get the chance to listen to the keynote speaker, Flo Hoppe from Syracuse, New York, who will share her weaving art during the conference.

I have been taking photographs since the early 90s and fell in love with both the Southwest and Yosemite during my travels. Abiquiu, New Mexico, is home to incredible vistas where Georgia O'Keefe painted, and Ghost Ranch, a spectacular ranch with wonderful hikes and workshops offered year round, where she lived. A visit through O'Keefe's studio provided a wonderful peek into her controversial life. This area has become one of my "favorite places," along with Yosemite, which is also home to incredible beauty. Images of these special places, which also include Vernal Falls, the Valley Floor, iconic Half Dome and some of the beautiful summer flowers, will also be on display.

Main Gallery began as an art gallery on Main Street in Visalia and has since been transformed into an innovative, collaborative group of artists, committed to enhancing the community with their art-making. Via both group and solo exhibitions at many different venues, we feature a wide variety of art media including acrylic, oil, watercolor, photography, collage, ceramics, stained glass, mixed media and gourds. During First Friday on January 3, between 5-7pm, visitors will have the opportunity to meet the artists, enjoy refreshments and artwork. The exhibit runs through March 1.

Michael's Custom Jewelry is located at 316 W Main St. in Visalia. For more information, visit www.maingalleryvisalia.com.

Jeri Burzin's photograph of La Morada in Abiquiu, New Mexico.

THEATER

Dec. 20-21 – A Dickens Christmas Carol
Encore Theatre Co. presents "A Dickens Christmas Carol," the story of an old theater troupe embarking on its 15th annual farewell tour of the classic Dickens tale. For tickets call 686-1300 or visit encore.jctalbert.com.

Dec. 21– Christmas Movies
The Visalia Main Library will show Christmas movies all day. For information visit tularecountylibrary.org.

Jan. 9 – Forever Tango – 7:30pm
For one night only, Broadway's Forever Tango will perform at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets, $25-100, are available at foxvisalia.org.

Jan. 24-25 – Respect
"Respect," a high-energy review of women in music from the early 1900s to the present, will be presented by The Visalia Players at The Ice House Theatre, located at the corner of Race and Santa Fe in Visalia. Evening performances are at 7:30pm on Jan. 24-25 and a matinee will be at 2pm on Jan. 26. For information, visit visaliaplayers.org.

Jan. 31 and Feb. 1-2 – Respect
"Respect," a high-energy review of women in music from the early 1900s to the present, will be presented by The Visalia Players at The Ice House Theatre, located at the corner of Race and Santa Fe in Visalia. Evening performances are at 7:30pm on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1 and a matinee will be at 2pm on Feb. 2. For information, visit visaliaplayers.org.

Feb. 6-9, 14-16 and 20-22 – The Drowsy Chaperone
Encore Theatre Company presents "The Drowsy Chaperone" at the Encore Theatre, 324 South N Street, Tulare. Advance tickets available. For more information, visit www.tulareencoretheatre.org.

ART

Through Dec. 20 – Arts Consortium Annual Holiday Show and Sale
Arts Visalia is exhibiting Chinese brush paintings by local artist Joy Harvey and her students in conjunction with the Annual Holiday Show and Sale through Dec. 20. The sale features unique gifts by local artists.

Through Dec. 29 – The Glow of Autumn Art Exhibit
The Exeter Courthouse Gallery of the Arts is showcasing "The Glow of Autumn" through Dec. 29. The exhibit features the works of two artists: Betty Berk from Visalia, and Jada Lee from Woodlake. Gallery and museum hours are Saturdays and Sundays from 10am-4pm. The gallery is located at 125 South B Street.

Through Dec. 29 – Annual Members' Winter Show
The Kings County Art League is hosting its Annual Members' Winter Show, featuring Tedra Giswold Battaglia and Wendy Griswold Lewis, through Dec. 29. The gallery is open Wednesday through Friday from 11am to 4pm and Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 3pm. Admission is free. The gallery is located at 605 N. Douty Street, Hanford. For information, visit kingsartcenter.org.

Through Dec. 29 – 20th Annual Young Masters' Show
The Kings County Art League 20th Annual Young Masters' Show is featuring artwork by K-12 Kings County schoolchildren. The exhibit will continue through Dec. 29. The gallery is open Wednesday through Friday from 11am to 4pm and Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 3pm. Admission is free. The Gallery is located at 605 N. Douty Street, Hanford. For information, visit kingsartcenter.org.

Jan. 3 – First Saturday in Three Rivers – 11am-5pm
First Saturday in Three Rivers will feature open art studios and art vendors. For information, visit 1stsaturdaytr.com.

Rawhide Announce 2014 Coaching Staff

Former Major League catcher Robby Hammock will manage the 2014 Visalia Rawhide, the Arizona Diamondbacks announced last week.

Arizona also sends former Tampa Bay Devil Rays outfielder Bobby Smith back to Tulare County as the Rawhide hitting coach, while 10-year Major League veteran Gil Heredia will serve as pitching coach.

Rawhide Manager Robby Hammock

Hammock, 36, played in parts of six Major League seasons for the D-backs, and played in 16 professional seasons overall. He made his big league debut in 2003, and retired after the 2011 season. His most memorable moment came on May 18, 2004, when he was behind the plate for Randy Johnson's perfect game.

Hammock spent last season as manager of the Missoula Osprey, the Diamondbacks Short-Season Class A affiliate. He originally hails from Macon, Georgia, and now resides in Peoria, Arizona.

Smith, 39, returns for his second season as Rawhide hitting coach. He played in parts of five seasons for the Tampa Bay Devil Rays from 1998-2002, and collected a pinch hit in their first game as an expansion franchise. This will be his fourth season as a hitting coach in the D-backs farm system.

Gil Heredia, meanwhile, also returns for his second season as Rawhide pitching coach. It will be his fifth season in the D-backs organization. He spent parts of 10 seasons in the Major Leagues, making his debut with the San Francisco Giants and ending his career with the Oakland A's, where he once defeated Roger Clemens in a playoff game.

With promising new Diamondbacks draft picks working their way through the system, the Rawhide coaching staff figures to have plenty of talent to work with.

"We look forward to having Randy Hammock and the rest of this terrific coaching staff lead the 2014 Rawhide," said club General Manager Jennifer Pendergraft. "It will be our eighth season with the Arizona Diamondbacks, who have been a great partner to the ballclub and the Visalia community."

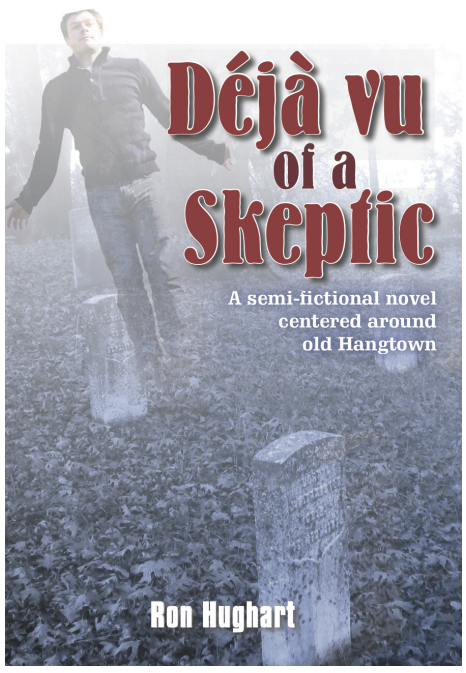
The Rawhide open their 2014 season at home on Thursday, April 3 against the Stockton Ports. For ticket information, call 732-4433 ext. 826.

Author Ron Hughart

Exeter Author Releases 'Déjà Vu of a Skeptic'

Local author Ron Hughart has written a new book, *Déjà Vu of a Skeptic*. The book is a departure from *The Place Beyond the Dust Bowl*, his book about the plight of his migrant family who fled the Dust Bowl to make their way to a new life in California.

Déjà Vu of a Skeptic is a semi-biographical novel inspired by an event that happened to him more than 25 years ago that left him baffled. While sitting in a small restaurant in Placerville, California, Hughart, a former police officer, became overwhelmed with the feeling that he'd been there before and knew more about the people and surroundings than he should. He found the sensation "scary, humbling, overwhelming, confusing and baffling."



"I am a true skeptic about these kinds of stories and have been all my life," he explained. "I think down deep I wanted to be wrong about what was happening to me."

Since its release in 2002, *The Place Beyond the Dust Bowl* has won numerous awards in the U.S. and Europe. In 2005, Hughart released *Beyond the Dust Bowl with a Pocket Full of Peanuts*, continuing his saga of growing up in the 1950s and 1960s in the San Joaquin Valley.

Hughart and his wife, Ann, live in Exeter. He enjoys talking about his experiences and has given lectures to organizations, schools, colleges and universities. He has also acted in movies, including "The Visitation" (2005) and "The Moment After II -The Awakening."

Hughart's book is available as paperback or eBook. For more information, visit ronhughart.com.

With a snow-filled setting as a background, a total of 213 people participated in the Trek to the Nation's Christmas Tree ceremony at Kings Canyon National Park on December 8. The event, which was sponsored by the Sanger District Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with the National Park Service, featured the Jubilation Singers, Sanger High School Choir and a non-denominational holiday message. During the ceremony, Acting Superintendent Colleen Bathe spoke about the General Grant Tree's role as a national shrine in memory of the men and women of the Armed Forces who have served, fought and died to keep America free. A memorial wreath was placed at the base of the General Grant Tree during the ceremony. Photo by D. Dierkes.

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Cannes

Continued from p. 17

while," he said. "My parents bought a videocamera for Christmas so I dressed my brother as Santa Claus and our neighbors as elves. I was sold at that point that this us what I wanted to do."

Dibble, who now lives in Long Beach, lived in Hanford until college. As a tribute to his hometown, the afternoon will also feature his films made in Hanford, starting with the first film he made as a child. Highlights of the award-winning documentary "Fort Roosevelt Requiem" will be screened and his latest film, "Moon-Lite," a six-and-a-half minute film about an eccentric old man, based on a children's book he wrote, and starring Hanford residents Jim Parks and Aaron Cano, will premiere.

"I use Hanford quite a bit," said Dibble. "I consider it my studio backlot. I love to shoot in Hanford because people are genuinely excited to help and there are a lot of interesting locations."

Renowned puppeteer and Hanford resident, Randel McGee, will host the Hanford Fox event along with his dragon, Groark.

"I credit him with being one of my influences," Dibble said about seeing McGee perform as a child. "I've really been fascinated and amazed at this dragon. He's been a role model and inspiration, and I am happy he's going to be part of the show."

Tickets are available at www.foxhanford.com or by calling theater at 584-7423. Prices are $8 for adults and $4 for children. Prices at the door will be $10 for adults and $5 for children.

For more information, visit www.adonisthemovie.com or www.foxhanford.com, or contact the theater at info@foxhanford.com or 584-7423.

James Snyder and Jimmy star in "Adonis."

Tulare Book

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When not doing historical or genealogical research, Carreño spends time with his wife, Gina, and their four children. He also finds time to collect baseball cards and to pursue political endeavors such as being the current chair of the Tulare County Political Action Committee and the vice chair of the Latino Democrats of Tulare County. Currently, he serves as a board member of the Tulare Community Health Clinic.

Carreño hopes that this work will bring back fond memories and inspire the preservation of many of Tulare's historical buildings and sites. He regards this book as a present to the city of Tulare and a portion of the author's profits from the sale of the book will be donated to the Tulare Athletic Club.

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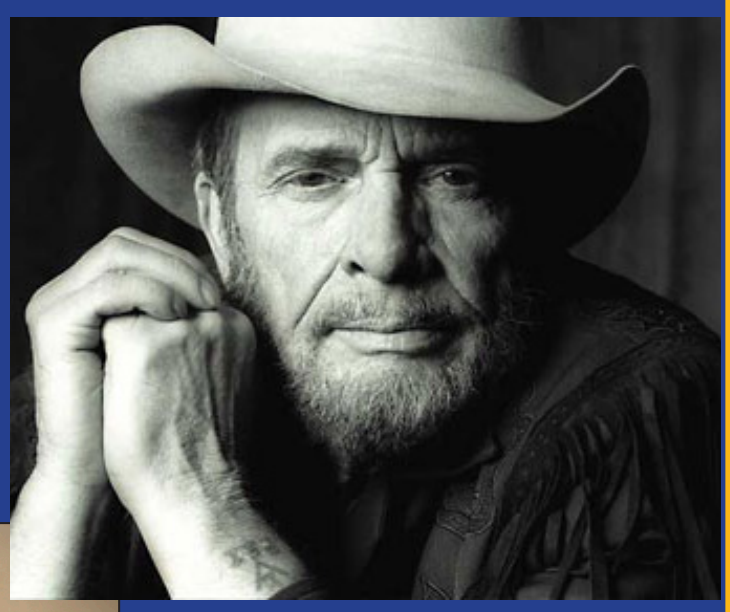

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The Sons

Continued from p. 17

began traveling on weekends while pursuing degrees in education, playing some professional baseball, and becoming schoolteachers. Jack was a high school counselor and coach. (He was named baseball "Coach of the Year" for the Western Region United States in 1980.) Joe was a junior high teacher and coach. The brothers have each performed as church soloists, and in opera and musical theater.

Lon became a second grade teacher and also had experience singing in church, in musical theater and with the Bennett Consort, a college vocal group often compared to Manhattan Transfer. In 1987, he approached his father (Joe) and Uncle Jack to ask that they sing together for his grandfather's birthday celebration. Almost by accident, the Sons of the San Joaquin were born.

They gained a needed break when Lon met cowboy singer Gary McMahan at a Western Music Association convention. He invited the trio to perform at the 1989 Elko Nevada Cowboy Poetry Gathering. There they ended up singing on stage with Michael Martin Murphey, who invited them to join him on his "Cowboy Songs" album.

In 1992, Joe and Jack were able to take early retirement from teaching to pursue the Sons' growing career full time. Lon took leave of absence from teaching before resigning in mid-1993.

Their television appearances include the "Grand Ole Opry," "Austin City Limits," "Nashville Now," "American Music Shop," "Prime-Time Country" and "Old Time Country Music."

Since 1992, the Sons of the San Joaquin have recorded several albums, one of them being "Gospel Trails," which features some of the Hannahs' favorite hymns. One of the selections, "In the Sweet By and By," features a special appearance by Dale Evans Rogers as lead vocalist.

Tickets are $19-$23, and are available at the Visalia Fox Theatre box office or by visiting www.foxvisalia.org.

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